



THE INDEPENDENT

№ 2237

RS DAY 6 MARCH 1997

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Tom Cruise reborn as a funny man



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Major and MPs bicker over gaffes

EXCLUSIVE

by Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Senior Tory MPs are so jittery about the party's electoral outlook that they have privately visited John Major to complain that the Government is sliding about on "banana skins". They protested about recent ministerial gaffes, confused messages and blurred party leadership.

On Tuesday night, officers of the party's 1922 Committee, including nearly 20 of the senior Tory backbench MPs, led by Sir Marcus Fox, chairman of the 1922, went to the Prime Minister to underline the growing anxiety on their benches at the recent disarray in the Cabinet. Mr Major, by all accounts, was deeply irritated.

They complained strongly about the disarray between Stephen Dorrell and Michael Forsyth over devolution; between Kenneth Clarke and Malcolm Rifkind about "hostility" to the European single currency; and Mr Dorrell's gaffe in ruling out ERM entry in 1999. All these gaffes, they said, had damaged morale, they told Mr Major.

The 1922 executive officers, who include some of the longest-serving Tory MPs, gave their backing to the Tory Party chairman, Brian Mawhinney, but complained about the confusion over who was in charge of the Conservative election campaign being mounted by Conservative Central Office.

One Tory MP who was there said: "Brian is doing a very good job. He is hard hitting, and can

put Labour on the spot. But there are too many chiefs."

The Prime Minister's friends dismissed the backbench complaints as a "whinge list" and said Mr Major had shown them a firm smack of leadership.

"They came with a fairly lengthy whinge list, but the Prime Minister sent them away with a flea in the ear," a former minister said.

They came with a fairly lengthy whinge list, but the PM sent them away with a flea in the ear

Mr Major is said to have impressed the group with his determination to lead from the front in the campaign for the election, which they were convinced will be on 1 May. "It will be a very personal campaign. He is very relaxed, and is pretty upbeat, now that the decks are being cleared," said another Tory source.

The group emerged with a conviction that Mr Major is planning a long campaign with polling day on 1 May, and that he will use the Conservative Central Council in Bath on 14 March as the springboard for the Tory fight-back against

Labour's lead.

With only eight weeks to go before the election, the arrival of the senior officers of the Tory backbench to complain about the confusion over the campaign may be seen by Mr Major as a further "banana skin", and he will be irritated that the meeting had leaked.

The Tory Party chairman was keen at the weekend to answer criticism about the confusion surrounding the Tory campaign by declaring "I'm in charge". There is continuing concern, however, that the Tory campaign in the heat of battle will face interference from others close to the leadership, including Lord Satchel, Michael Heseltine, the deputy Prime Minister, David Willetts, head of research, Dancy Finkelstein, the director of research at Conservative Central Office, and Charles Lewington, the director of the party's communication and press office.

Mr Mawhinney killed the "tearful lion" poster campaign, which many Tories felt had missed the point. He overruled Lord Satchel by insisting that the latest poster, "Tony and Bill", should be tested with a group of voters before it was given the go-ahead.

The MPs who met the Prime Minister believe that the latest campaign posters are on the right lines, by attacking Labour's spending commitments, but they want the campaign to be more hard-hitting, and above all, they want the Cabinet "singing from the same hymn sheet".



When smoking was cinema chic: Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. BAT are close to settling with US lung cancer sufferers of her generation. Photograph: Paramount Pictures

Cigarette makers pay their debt to early cancer victims

Tom Stevenson and Patricia Wynn Davies

Pressure mounted on the two biggest British tobacco companies to settle claims from lung cancer victims yesterday after BAT held out the prospect of a multi-billion pound settlement with thousands of smokers in the United States.

BAT, maker of one in ten of the 5.3 trillion cigarettes smoked every year, said for the first time that it would consider a "sensible proposal" to resolve its 40-year stand-off with the anti-smoking lobby, although it stopped short of admitting liability for any deaths.

Martin Broughton, chief executive of London-based BAT, which makes Lucky Strike, Kool and Benson & Hedges in the United States, said the cost of litigation and the impact of outstanding American court cases on shares had forced it to consider a deal.

He added: "There ought to be a sensible figure... that would get lawsuits off our agenda and let us get on with running our business."

The climbdown is a dramatic development after four decades in which the industry has consistently refused to admit the harm cigarettes cause and boasted of how it has never paid a cent in damages.

While BAT does not sell cigarettes in Britain, the company's shift in attitude could have important implications for claims by British smokers against two other tobacco giants. In the first group legal action in the UK, 40 cancer victims are claiming that Gallaher, which makes British

Benson & Hedges and Silk Cut, and Imperial Tobacco Group, which makes Embassy and Players, negligently failed to cut tar levels in their products when it became clear that this would have reduced cancer among smokers.

Maryn Day, of Leigh Day & Co, the solicitors co-ordinating the case, said: "I think there is no question that BAT considering settlement will have a very big impact on the cases here, because of the effect the smoking litigation has had on share prices."

"We know that the prices have been severely depressed here. By having some sort of resolution they will lift the cloud that is hanging over their heads. The pressures from stockholders in Gallaher and Imperial will be very great," he said.

Mr Day, has estimated that if the two companies lost, they could be at risk of claims for the next 10 to 15 years from smokers who took up the habit in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the heyday of cigarette advertising when the joys of tobacco were also at the heart of cinema chic. Taking an average claim of £50,000, that could cost them £1bn to £2bn a year over the 10 to 15 year period.

Ash, the anti-smoking group, has been urging investors to take note of the legal action when considering whether to invest in the tobacco industry. But Ash is concerned that the tobacco conglomerates might settle cases in America and Europe, but largely unregulated sales would continue unabated in the Third World.

BAT results, page 18, Business Comment, page 19

Lilley unveils his pensions revolution

Frank Abrams
Political Correspondent

The Government shook one of the main pillars of the welfare state last night as it announced plans to hand pensions over to the private sector.

The basic state pension is to be phased out over the next generation if the Conservatives stay in power, along with the State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme, Serps.

The revelation brought a delighted reaction from the City, which stands to win massive amounts of new, state-subsidised business from the changes announced by John Major and his Social Security Secretary, Peter Lilley.

Mr Major denied that the announcement was designed as an electoral ploy, but he must hope it could encourage the same instincts among voters as the encouragement of home-ownership did during the 1980s.

"For years we have pursued a strong and consistent policy of encouraging personal ownership by individuals and families. It enables them to provide for themselves... with self-reliance comes self-respect and greater freedom of choice," he said.

The plans, worked out by ministers over many months and agreed by the Cabinet on Tuesday, would not be completely in place until 2040. They would allow most of today's employees to stick with their current pen-

sion arrangements but would furnish anyone now in their teens or younger with a new Basic Pension Plus.

Each employee would have two pensions - a basic pension

occupation. In 1950, five working people contributed to each old age pension, he said, but by 2030 there would be three pensioners for every five working people. Labour said the plans would

Chancellor, said that in the year before the first private pension-holders retired, the state would face an extra £7bn payment.

"The tax and spending problem with the Conservative pension proposals is utterly basic: there are huge front-end costs which will run into billions of pounds and mean higher taxes for everyone. The question Mr Major and Mr Lilley have refused to answer is: how much?" he said.

Conservative sources said the equalisation of men's and women's retirement ages and 1995 reforms to Serps would save £13bn per year and more than fill the gap.

The Labour leader, Tony

Blair, added: "A vote for the Conservatives when Mr Major finally calls the election will be a vote for the privatisation of the state pension, a vote for more insecurity. And it will also be a vote for higher taxes."

The Association of British Insurers was enthusiastic. Its director general, Mark Boleat, said: "Individuals will have a real sense of ownership in their pension arrangements and be able to see much more clearly what provision they are making and how their pension fund is building up."

The Consumers' Association warned that the "appalling track record" of the private pensions industry could come back to haunt future governments.

INSIDE

Lilley the radical guesses 40 years ahead;
Labour split over Serps;
£175 a week and big savings, page 8
Major challenged to live on monthly pension, page 9

and a top-up fund, to which they could add extra, voluntary contributions if they wished.

Mr Lilley said the proposals would bring about the largest extension of personal ownership since the increase in owner-oc-

cupation. In 1950, five working people contributed to each old age pension, he said, but by 2030 there would be three pensioners for every five working people. Labour said the plans would

Gordon Brown, the Shadow

Test cricketers sent to charm school

Nick Duxbury

The Labour Party has done it, the Tories did it years ago and now the England cricket team are to bring in the professionals to smarten up their image on the campaign trail.

England's history of flying the flag on tour to the far corners of the globe is littered with diplomatic incidents, and HQ at Lord's has decided that a PR make-over will prevent the kind of misconception that the team suffers from a "superiority complex".

Every player involved in the winter tour of Zimbabwe and

New Zealand, plus five or six others on the fringe of the senior side, are to attend a two-day charm school next month which will teach the team that tact can be just as effective as tactics.

David Lloyd, the England coach and one of the forces behind the initiative, knows full well that a few unchoice words can do a lot of damage. After annoying the Zimbabweans with claims that England had "flipped" murdered them in the drawn First Test, he later explained that his players were under-performing because they preferred "the food, climate and

people of New Zealand". For bigger gaffes, however, few come close to the comment of Ian Botham - part of the England coaching team this winter - who in 1984 said that Pakistan "is the sort of place every man should send his mother-in-law for a month, all expenses paid".

A present England player, the bowler Phil Tufnell, whose signature name "Cigarettes and Alcohol" by Oasis gives the PR gurus plenty to work on, summed up his feelings on the 1993 tour of India thus: "I've done the elephant. I've done the poverty. I might as well go

home." Michael Atherton caused offence at last year's World Cup for his response to persistent questioning by a local Pakistani journalist. "Will someone remove that buffoon," an exasperated England captain said.

Now all is to change. "The seminar will take the players through the whole issue of training them to represent their country," Lloyd said of his new sporting ambassadors. "We will look at the problems we had in Zimbabwe, and we will discuss what is coming up. The whole subject of preparing players will be addressed."



QUICKLY

Electoral choice
Labour yesterday promised to offer voters a choice between the present, first-past-the-post system and proportional representation in time for a new millennium election. Page 6

Swiss offer deal
Switzerland yesterday announced plans to endow a £3bn foundation for victims of Nazi genocide. Page 5

Albania clashes
Southern Albania was the scene of a massive security operation, including soldiers equipped with tanks and armoured personnel carriers, but armed civilians appeared to come out ahead in early fighting. Page 10

THE BROADSHEET

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news

significant shorts

Anonymous Labour fund given the all-clear

The Labour Party's fund to raise money from anonymous donors has been given the all-clear by an all-party committee of MPs which has decided not to investigate it. The controversial "blind" fund was set up in 1995 as a way of raising money in such a way that the identities of the donors were not known to anyone in the party apart from the board of trustees, chaired by Lord Merlyn-Rees, the former Home Secretary.

The fund was the subject of a complaint by David Shaw, the Tory MP for Dover, who last year wrote to Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, suggesting it was "inconceivable that a donor would not seek to draw the receiving MP's attention to his donation at some time". However, the Labour Party had taken the precaution of checking with Sir Gordon whether the fund breached parliamentary rules, and Sir Gordon felt he had to refer the complaint to the Standards and Privileges Committee.

Now, the committee has effectively rejected the complaint by deciding that it would only consider the allegation that Mr Blair knew about the identity of donors to the fund and has asked Mr Shaw to provide evidence on that point, which is likely to prove impossible.

Christian Wolmar

Child hammer victim was tortured



Detectives hunting the killer of Lin and Megan Russell revealed yesterday that Lin was bound and gagged during the hammer attack and a shoelace tied round her six-year-old daughter's neck to make her comply with the killer's demands.

Lin, 44, and Megan were found bludgeoned to death on a footpath near their home in Chillingham, near Canterbury, Kent, on 9 July last year. The mother's elder daughter Josie, nine, survived the attack.

'Mail' escapes contempt charge

The newspaper which branded five unconvicted men as the murderers of Stephen Lawrence will not face contempt of court proceedings. The office of Sir Nicholas Lyell, the Attorney General, said yesterday: "The Attorney General has considered carefully the suggestion that articles published by the *Daily Mail* following the inquest into the death of Stephen Lawrence might constitute contempt of court at common law. He has concluded that proceedings for contempt would not be justified."

Alcoholic surgeon cleared by Sheriff

An alcoholic surgeon was yesterday cleared of causing the deaths of two elderly patients who died following operations he performed.

In a ruling into the deaths, Sheriff Principal Gordon Nicholson found surgeon Gerald Davidson, 49, could not be held responsible for the deaths of Lillian patients Willie Callaghan, 69, of Bridgend, and 56-year-old Ann Halloran, of Livingston. Both died after undergoing bowel operations carried out by Mr Davidson at St John's Hospital, Livingston.

Twelve arrested on abuse charges

Twelve people have been arrested following a major investigation by police into child abuse. Seven children, aged between four months and eight years and from two households, have been taken into emergency care as a result of the inquiry.

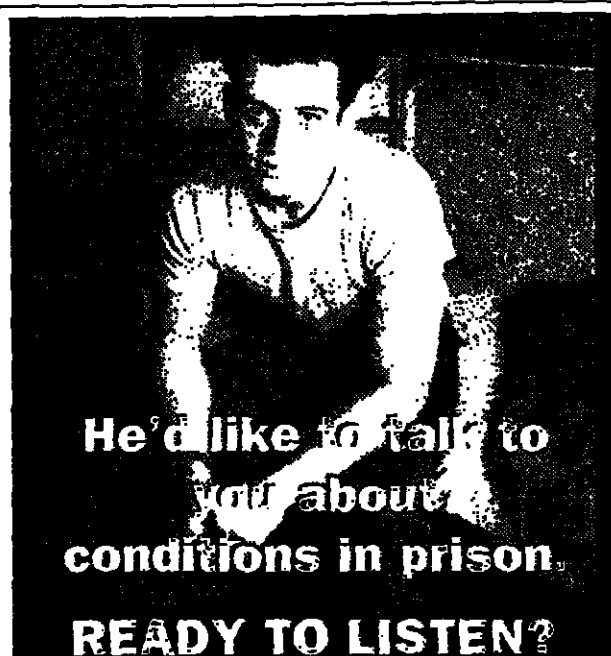
Police made the arrests early yesterday morning when they executed eight warrants in Portsmouth and went to another address in Aldershot, Hampshire.

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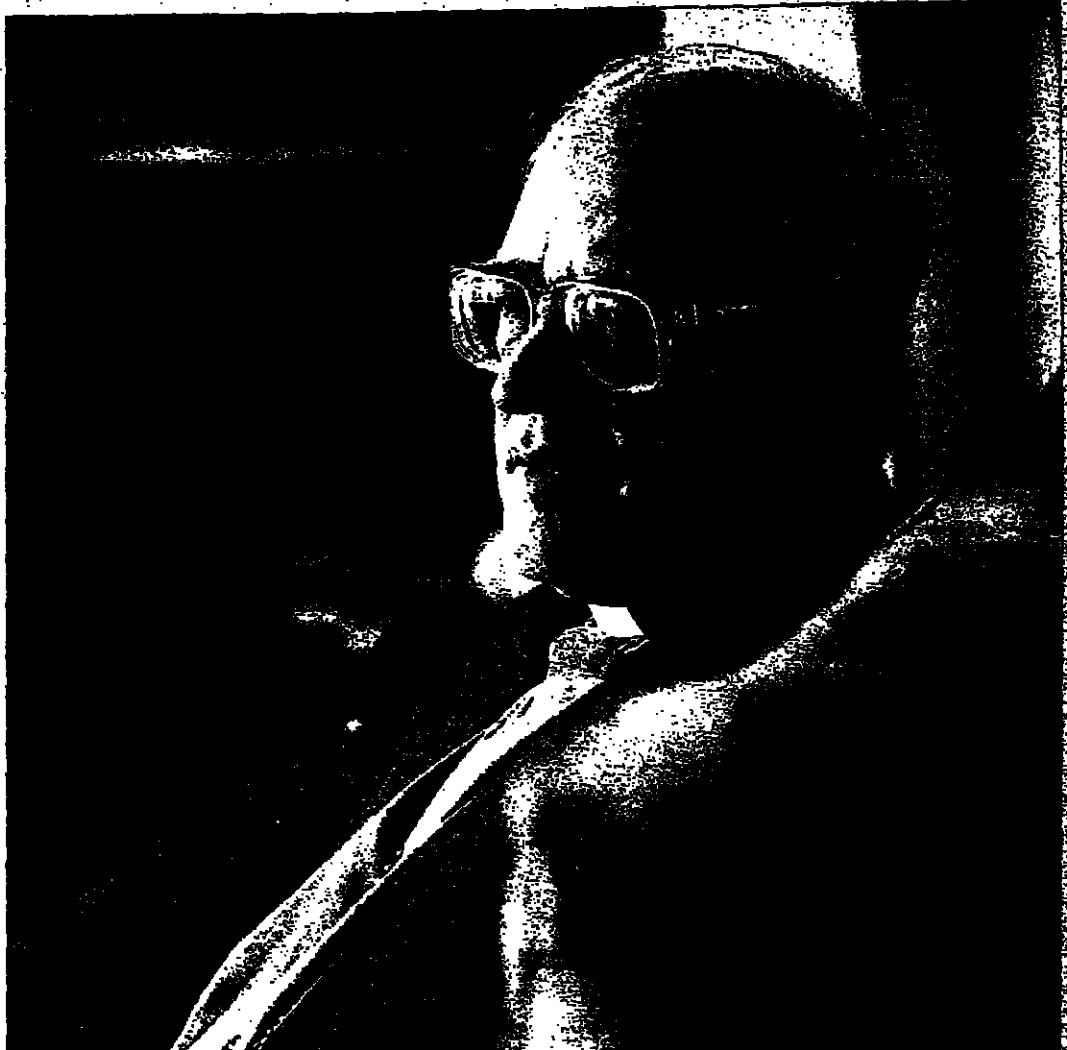
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Dr Carey: 'What matters is your own integrity, what you really believe in' Photograph: Tim Phipps

Essex Archbishop captured by fly on the vestry wall

Second only to the Royal Family in the British establishment, the Archbishop of Canterbury is a modest Essex man who keeps his wife's teddy bear in the bedroom, supports Arsenal Football Club and has a gentle sense of humour.

This is the picture of Dr George Carey to emerge from an unprecedented fly-on-the-vestry-wall documentary series, to be screened across the ITV network next month, which sets out to show both the public and private sides of the first working-class head of the Church of England.

But above all, the series shows, he is a man of unshakeable faith, with a determination to make the Church face up to the realities of the end of the 20th century. "My wife teases me that I have 100 good ideas every day but only one is good. But if I am convinced that an idea is God-given it will take a lot to knock me out of the driving-seat," he tells viewers.

And when the Radio 4 broadcaster John Humphrys pushed hard for Dr Carey to comment on adultery, following the announcement of the Prince and Princess of Wales' divorce, he revealed what can only be described as an irreverent wit. "Nasty man," he smiled to his press secretary when the microphone was switched off.

Dr Carey grew up in Dagenham and is proud of the

fact that he can call himself a true Cockney, born with an earshot of Bow Bells. Although he was brought up in a God-fearing family, his parents did not go to church, chiefly because his mother did not have a hat.

His determination to succeed stemmed from failing his 11-plus exam, after which he vowed that "by hook or by crook I was going to get there". He originally wanted to join the Merchant Navy as a radio operator but ended up in the RAF and it was there he heard his calling. On being told by a young ordinand that he would "never make it" he became determined to prove the doubters wrong.

Dr Carey met his wife, Eileen, in 1960, when he was 20 and she was 17. They had met at their local parish church in Dagenham.

Nowadays, when the couple have a few days off, they escape to their flat in Bristol, where they read "talk a lot" and play Scrabble. "She nearly always wins, so I learn the grace of humility when I play with her. Despite being troubled by what he perceives as society's moral shortcomings and frequently depressed by his portrayal in the media, he is still able to draw on "an inner reservoir of cheerfulness".

"You have to say 'don't worry about it, that will one day be forgotten. What really matters is your own integrity, what you believe in'." Kate Watson-Smyth

Future is all in the past, says Clarke

A technology that was barely nascent 25 years ago let the scientist and author Arthur C. Clarke (right) sit at home in Sri Lanka yesterday and offer his vision of the next quarter-century to a conference in London.

Via a satellite video link, Dr Clarke, 79, predicted Dick Tracy-style high quality wristwatch video telephones by the end of this century, and a computer at least in every village - if not every home - in the developed world.

The key to understanding the future was the evidence of the past, he told the Convergence 97 conference, whose theme is the convergence of computing, media and communication industries. "Twenty years ago most offices did not have a fax machine, and still used typewriters. Now the fax machine is being replaced by e-mail and the typewriter is almost redundant," he said. "But all this is just a beginning. Everyone will soon have access to everyone else."

However, he said he feared some of the consequences of changing technology - especially the information explosion and what he called "information pollution".

Dr Clarke is best known for the book and film 2001: A Space Odyssey, and its sequels. The lat-



est book, 2001, is published at the end of this month.

He is famous for predicting satellite communication back in the 1940s, and has published numerous serious scientific papers dealing with emerging and anticipated technology, as well as dozens of best-selling science fiction novels and his well-known "Clarke's Laws".

He ended his speech yesterday with a light-hearted warning to conference delegates, telling them: "Maybe our successors, the computers and intelligent machines, which will be running the world for us, will get fed up with humans and get rid of us. If they do, it will serve us right."

Charles Arthur

Bangkok connection for Queen's new press assistant

A Briton who went to live and work in Thailand after university, and was asked to help with the Queen's state visit to Bangkok last year, has been appointed as assistant press secretary to the Queen.

David Tuck, 30, will take up his new appointment next week. Buckingham Palace announced yesterday.

He fills the vacancy created by the promotion of Penny Russell-Smith to be deputy press secretary, when Geoff Crawford succeeded Charles Anson last month as press secretary.

Mr Tuck, who was educated at Westminster School and University College, London, worked for the British Embassy in Bangkok after deciding to stay in that part of the world.

He was not a career diplomat but was employed locally at the embassy, said a Palace spokesman.

Since 1995 he has been head of the British Trade Office in Vientiane, Laos, but last year agreed to return to Thailand to help with press arrangements for the Queen's visit.

Blokeish Baker's bubble finally bursts

Like the bubbles in the football fans' song, Danny Baker, the motor-mouth radio and TV presenter, may have climbed too high. Baker, the embodiment of 'bloke' culture, was yesterday sacked by BBC Radio 5 Live for encouraging fans to make a referee's life hell after the official awarded a controversial penalty in the Leicester v Chelsea FA Cup tie last week.

Baker made his name as the football fans' champion on London radio station GLR in the late Eighties, before presenting his own BBC 1 chat show and endorsing soap powder. Recently he has returned to radio, although he is still a scriptwriter for his friend Chris Evans' *TFI Friday* show on Channel 4.

During his Wednesday evening radio show last week he also encouraged journalists to: "Go out and doorstep the referee like he was a member of Oasis." Baker harangued callers to his show, *The Baker Line*, who disagreed with his view of the penalty.

Last November he got into trouble for telling Tottenham Hotspur fans, angry at their team's performance, to throw their match programmes onto the pitch - which is against the law.

Roger Mosey, controller of Radio 5 Live, said Baker's outbursts could no longer be tolerated. "This wasn't the first occasion when he crossed the dividing line between being lively, humorous and controversial and being insulting to the audience."

Baker refused to continue working for Radio 5 Live on his Sunday afternoon show, but will stay with GLR for the time being.

But not all of his bubbles have burst. Talk Radio, the commercial radio station which made a failed bid to lure Chris Evans when he walked out of Radio 1 in January, claims it will have Baker on air "in the very near future".

Paul McCann

briefing

HEALTH

Shortage of medical staff in NHS casualty units

Britain's casualty departments lack doctors, nurses and intensive care beds, says a survey published today. Intensive care beds make up only 1 per cent of all NHS beds, compared with 6 per cent in the US, and mortality rates are higher.

Nine out of 10 accident and emergency consultants said that medical staffing levels were inadequate, while three-quarters thought that nursing levels were too low. Many said that they were working at or beyond safety limits.

The survey, commissioned by the Association of London Government and UNISON, found that the situation in London was especially acute, following the closure of almost 3,000 of the capital's beds (14.2 per cent) since 1991 - twice the national average rate. Bed occupancy rates in London hospitals are 95-100 per cent, well above the recommended level of 80-85 per cent, which would allow for emergency admissions.

Ask: NHS in Distress, NHS Support Federation. Tel: 0171 633 0807.

Annabel Ferriman

UTILITIES

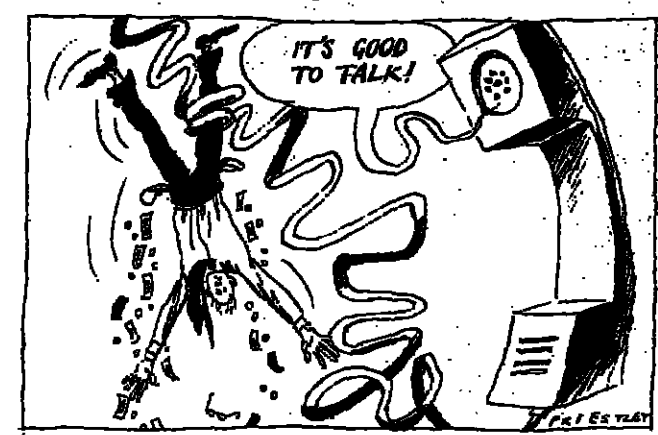
BT discounts are false economy

Most domestic telephone users would still be better switching from BT, despite its discount schemes, the Consumers' Association said yesterday. Its research was published as figures showed some 87,000 customers a month are leaving BT for cable telecom companies - an increase of almost 50 per cent on the last published rate of 60,000 a month.

The analysis by Which? magazine found that BT remains the most expensive option for most consumers, with many saving up to 20 per cent by switching to other providers.

When all the companies were compared using a typical quarterly bill, including rental costs and all UK calls, all of BT's rivals were cheaper, even after the widely advertised discount schemes were taken into account. Only people whose call bills were less than £12.69 per quarter got a better deal from BT than the cable companies. Those which came out best were Bell Cablemedia, Cable London, ComCast (Ibexside), Ionica and Nynex - consistently a fifth or more cheaper.

Glenda Cooper



EMPLOYMENT

Women face pay discrimination

Women are out of work for shorter stretches of time than men, but still suffer from pay inequality, an official report claimed yesterday. A third of unemployed women have been jobless for less than three months, compared with 22 per cent of men.

Around 28 per cent of women have been out of work for longer than a year, well below the 45 per cent of long-term unemployed men, according to Labour Market Trends, produced by the Office for National Statistics.

The average hourly wage for full-time women workers is £7-80 per cent of that for men (£8.75). Part-time earnings are roughly the same for both sexes, at just over £5 an hour.

The number of women with jobs has increased by 1.3 million in the last decade. Half of those are part-time workers. Overall, women form an increasing proportion of the workforce, representing more than 43 per cent last year, the report said.

FINANCE

Trial tarnishes taxman's image

A quarter of finance directors have lost faith in the Inland Revenue in the wake of the corruption scandal surrounding maverick tax investigator Michael Allcock. According to a survey published today, the finance chiefs said the affair was a "poor reflection of the Revenue's management control".

Allcock was jailed for five years at the Old Bailey last month for taking bribes. The former inspector was convicted of six charges of corruption - but cleared of five others. The case has shaken the Revenue to its 300-year-old foundations.

The survey of 200 finance directors, conducted by Accountancy Age magazine and Reed Accountancy Personnel, found a quarter also believed Allcock was "unlikely to be an isolated incident". One said: "It has shattered my respect for their integrity."

SCIENCE

Healing properties of tobacco

Tobacco could one day be good for us - or at least tobacco plants might, by producing artificial blood. A team of French scientists has genetically modified tobacco plants so that they produce haemoglobin, the molecule essential for carrying oxygen around the body, in their roots and seeds.

The genes for two different protein "subunits" are needed to make haemoglobin, and have to be assembled into the correct formation. When the researchers added the genes to the plants, they found that haemoglobin was produced - and that when extracted and purified, it functioned just as in the human body, binding both to oxygen and to carbon monoxide.

Reporting on their work today in the science journal *Nature*, the team hope that such transgenic plants could in future provide a cheap and safe source of various human proteins.

At present, the haemoglobin used for a range of artificial blood substitutes is mainly derived from human donors, animal blood or genetically engineered animals. But those sources all carry the risk of contamination and infection.

Charles Arthur

ASTRONOMY

Evidence found for binary stars

Cinemagoers have known since *Star Wars* that planets can orbit around double, or "binary", stars. Like Skywalker's home planet has a double sunset. Now astronomers have caught up. Today, in the science journal *Nature* they reveal the first evidence to back up the cinema vision, in the form of images of a dust disk around a binary star system more than 1,000 light years away.

Although planets or asteroids around other stars cannot be seen directly through telescopes, astronomers believe that the fine dust they generate could be revealed as a disc lit up by reflected light. However, only one other example of such a dust disc has been seen before, around the star *Beta Pictoris*.

The new finding is important because more than half the stars in our galaxy are members of binary or multiple systems. The binary star now thought to be a potential candidate for a planetary system is known only as BD+31°543. It is 1,075 light years from the sun, in the constellation of Perseus.

Charles Arthur



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Going bananas over mutton dressed as art

Phil Reeves
Moscow

There are black eyes and cut lips. There are scores of outraged witnesses. There is a crime scene, stained by a pool of blood. And there is a decapitated corpse. A cut-and-dried case, you might think? Nothing is that easy in the world of performance art. The sacrifice of a sheep at an art fair in Moscow and the ensuing fight pitted ethics and freedom of expression in a squabble which rivals that over Damien Hirst's notorious cows. It happened at the fair's opening at Moscow's Central House of Artists. The moment they saw performance artists from Kazakhstan bringing in a sheep, a group of German artists became convinced that it was doomed to die. They pleaded for its life. They organised a petition. One of their number - Simon Stockhausen, son of the composer - played the saxophone to the animal, to calm it down. All in vain. Watched by dozens of horrified guests, the Kazakhs slaughtered the sheep, smeared its entrails over their bodies, and drank the blood

from sacrificial cups. It was, one told the *Moscow Times*, a painless traditional ritual - or legitimate performance art. The Germans, a group called Bananc, disagreed. They specialised in the less bloodthirsty "art" of spraying bananas on world monuments, and have already left their mark on the Kremlin gates. After hearing shrieks from the guests, they stormed the Kazakhs and launched into a five-minute fight in which the exhibit - an abstract affair involving blood, milk and blue water (the colours of the Russian flag) - was wrecked. The Kazakhs have since been banned from the exhibition. But the arguments go on. The Germans are still furious, saying the Kazakhs achieved nothing more meaningful than cruelty. But, worse, they were also passed, as sacrificial art first began in the sixties. "This kind of sacrificial art is clichéd now," said Thomas Baum-Gärtel. But the Kazakhs have their defenders, including one of Moscow's top gallery owners, Marat Gulman, host of several Kazakh chicken slayings, who accused the Germans of "shocking snobbery" and ignoring national traditions.



Fruity flavour: Helmut Kohl and Boris Yeltsin made from banana shapes by the German Thomas Baum-Gärtel at the Central House of Artists in Moscow Photograph: Reuters

BBC sells its beasts, toffs and Daleks to the world



Star attractions: Sir David Attenborough and Michael Palin, whose programmes are among the top sellers



Rob Brown
Media Editor

Brighton brightened up yesterday, but the sudden burst of sunshine didn't cheer everyone on the rain-soaked Sussex coast. The improvement in the weather was an unwanted distraction for a weird bunch of people who were perfectly content to huddle indoors and watch television morning, noon and night.

On Sunday afternoon the Brighton Centre was taken over by 400 television executives drawn from 90 broadcasters in 40 countries.

Once again, programme buyers from all parts of the globe came, saw and concurred that no other media organisation anywhere on the planet can match the British Broadcasting Corporation in the consistent quality stakes.

This was the 21st anniversary of BBC Showcase, an annual jamboree in which Auntie Beeb pitches her best programmes to an admiring multi-lingual audience.

But what started off as an amateurish little affair involving a quick trawl through the archives and a few trestle tables has ballooned into one of the biggest events in the broadcasting calendar.

Auntie is becoming an ever more aggressive exporter as she endeavours to supplement her license fee income by developing the BBC as a global media brand.

Ruby Wax, Sir David Attenborough and Michael Palin have all been brought down to Brighton to sprinkle some stardust on the grey promenade. BBC Worldwide, the organ-

isation established to pursue this enterprising strategy, generated £131m from programme distribution last year, bringing £77m in gross value to the BBC. Its aim is to treble this commercial return during the current 10-year charter period.

Directing its international distribution network is a 30-year-old Hispanic-American woman called Fabiola Arredondo. Head-hunted from the German media giant Bertelsmann, she has clearly been in her element over the last four days, using her multi-lingual skills and negotiating nous in order to cut an endless succession of instant deals.

An amateur little affair has ballooned into one of the biggest events of the calendar

"I see a real opportunity for the BBC to develop a terrific brand which has, up to now, been rather under-exploited internationally," she says, weaving her way through the tightly-packed viewing booths.

The 400 buyers are each assigned their own makeshift booth, kitted out with a portable television and a video recorder. Apart from a few famous props strategically dotted around the place, such as Del Boy Trotter's beaten-up yellow van from *Only Fools and Horses*

and the hideous costumes from *Red Dwarf*, it has the air of a modern university library.

Most of the buyers only remove their headphones and emerge from behind their hardboard partition when they want to borrow another tape, or stretch their legs, pop out for a quick smoke, and slap down a coffee in the adjoining café.

"The BBC has been the best for years and we're prepared to pay more for its consistently high standards," enthuses Dieter Kaiser, one of a three-strong delegation from WDR in Cologne, during a lunch break at the Grand Hotel.

The Germans, along with many others, are wild about wildlife programming and simply can't get enough from David Attenborough and his colleagues at the BBC Natural History Unit in Bristol, which is currently celebrating its 40th anniversary.

Since the collapse of Communism, the East European networks have also become steadily bigger customers. Although their resources are limited, they are assiduously cultivated by Maria Burguera, BBC's senior sales executive for Russia and Eastern Europe, who, like her boss, has a Hispanic background.

Serbia's broadcasting corporation was banned from the BBC Showcase at the height of the Balkan conflict, so its head of acquisitions, Nada Pejovic Hadzic, is happy to be back in Brighton for the fourth time in 10 years. "We cover a smaller transmission territory since the death of Yugoslavia, so we need to buy more from abroad to fill our schedules," she said.



Multi-lingual: Fabiola Arredondo, 30, who was head-hunted from a German media giant to direct BBC Worldwide's international distribution network Photograph: Andrew Hasson

South African networks have also had a strong presence since the death of apartheid ended the Equity-inspired ban on television exports.

Pauline Cunningham, from the pay-TV service M-Net, is snapping up all the classic com-

edy and drama series that her compatriots were deprived of when they were international pariahs. She has brought *Fawlty Towers*, *Yes, Minister* and *The Manor Born* to M-Net's 1 million subscribers.

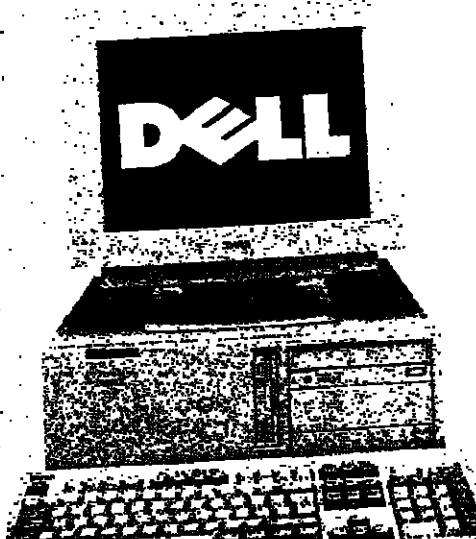
She finds her annual trip to Brighton "far more civilised" than the other big television markets, which are held in more glamorous locations, such as Monte Carlo and Cannes. "We can actually sit back and watch a whole series if we want," she said.

BBC best-selling programmes		
Title	Category	Cumulative
The Living Planet	Natural History	82
Flight of the Emperor	Natural History	74
Doctor Who	Drama	67
Animal Opponents	Natural History	66
The Six Wives of Henry VIII	Drama	65
The One and Only	Drama	65
Supersense	Natural History	65
The Incredible Bird	Natural History	63
Tender is the Night	Drama	62
Ascend of Man	Natural History	62
Fawlty Towers	Comedy	60

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news

Girls on top again, as inspectors say failing schools are full of boys

Lucy Ward
Education Correspondent

First, the statistics confirmed girls outstrip boys at every stage of their school careers. Now the education world has served up another harsh truth for the male sex – the majority of

schools which are failing their pupils have many more boys than girls.

In its first major overview of the characteristics of failing schools, the inspection agency Ofsted yesterday said gender imbalance was a notable common factor.

Of 260 schools which have been judged to need "special measures" since the inspection cycle began in 1993, not one is girls-only, most are mixed but with a big majority of boys.

Ofsted's survey revealed that failing schools are almost always characterised by poor leader-

ship, underachievement by pupils and a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching.

The findings held true even though institutions failing their pupils spanned the whole range of schools, from inner-city secondaries to special schools and tiny rural primaries.

Conversely, schools which had failed but were on the road to recovery, or were among the 19 freed from special measures, were united in their tactics for improvement. The most common step, taken by half of those failing, was to replace long-serving headteachers.

Improving schools drew up clear action plans with measurable targets, boosted curriculum planning, tackled poor behaviour and attendance, communicated well with parents and managed their finances efficiently.

Twelve schools on the failing

list have closed so far, though one has shut since last summer. Ofsted's head of school improvement, Dr Elizabeth Passmore, said the evidence that most failing schools had a high proportion of boys added to the agency's findings in a report last July, confirming girls generally

outshone boys in educational performance.

That study, *The Gender Divide*, revealed that girls did better than boys in English from the age of seven and were more successful than boys at every level in GCSE.

Education+ In The Tabloid

Poor marking flaws primary tests, says study

Judith Judd
Education Editor

Serious flaws in national tests for 11-year-olds, which will form the basis of next week's Government league tables for primary schools, are revealed in a study published today.

The research from King's College, London, says that the questions and marking of the English tests were so bad that nearly one in four children was given the wrong "level" or grade. Most received a lower level than they deserved.

Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, originally planned to wait until the tests had "bedded down" before publishing primary league tables but was persuaded by Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, to change her mind. Labour said last week that its new league tables would be based on the tests.

Government exam advisers who supervised the tests immediately condemned the study as "flimsy".

In science, the researchers found, one in ten children was given the wrong level and some questions were so badly worded that they could be answered by guesswork or without any knowledge of science.

Researchers re-marked 338 test scripts by 143 pupils in ten schools. The expected "level" for an 11-year-old is 4. Pupils

Children's stories

"Frankie was a little grey mouse of about two years old. His mother had died when he was only three weeks old leaving him all alone in the world."

And later: "Yummy, yummy, yummy in my tummy," said Frankie as he edged nearer to the great slab of cheese.

Examples from a "twice" story awarded a high Level 5 which researchers say was only worth Level 4.

"Kevin was getting really frustrated because it just wasn't his day. He kept missing the ball and was always getting tackled when he had the ball. It was his worst performance on the football pitch ever. The worst thing was that he had been dropped from the five-a-side tournament because of his play in recent days."

Example from a story awarded Level 4 which researchers say deserved Level 5.

graded Level 5 are two years ahead of their age.

In English, marking mistakes were found in every single paper, in 84 per cent of science ones and 54 per cent of maths scripts. The level changes mainly involved more able pupils, who moved from Level 4 to Level 5.

In story writing, the researchers argue, the markers were prejudiced against topics such as football, adventure and crime, often written by boys, and in favour of two, "Disneyesque styles characterised by 'little' and 'lovely'."

Nearly two-thirds of the ques-

tions in the English reading test were unclear, the report, commissioned by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said.

One question asked pupils to say whether or not a boy got on with his brother and to explain their reasons for choosing yes or no. There was no indication that an extra mark was awarded only if they said that he both got on with him and did not get on with him.

In science, says the report, "correct answers could be achieved by a lucky guess." In a question on magnets, for instance, candidates had to choose between the words "repel" and "attract" so there was a 50 per cent chance of obtaining each answer without knowing anything about magnets or the meaning of either word.

Professor Margaret Brown, professor of maths education at King's, says in the foreword: "The study shows that both the tests and the marking have not yet reached sufficiently high standards to justify teacher and public confidence. Its findings are important because of the major consequences of these tests for schools, teachers and pupils."

Dr Nick Tate, chief executive of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, called the research flimsy and biased. The authority's own study by Bath University of 10,000 scripts from 1,600 pupils had found none of the flaws.



Standing together: Striking teachers on the march in Glasgow yesterday, in a protest against proposed council-funding cuts Photograph: Drew Farrell

Labour threat to super-grammar

Lucy Ward
Education Correspondent

Labour could overturn plans to build the first grammar school in Britain for over 30 years if it wins the general election.

The party yesterday pledged to review a scheme for an elite "super-grammar" for the top 5 per cent of pupils in Milton Keynes, which has just been approved by Gillian Shephard, the

Secretary of State for Education and Employment.

The review would take into account two previous local consultations on the proposal, in which a majority of parents were opposed. Supporters of selection are likely to seize on Labour's pledge as evidence that the party remains antagonistic to grammar schools.

However, Labour claims a review would be in line with

making parental wishes paramount, as the consultations revealed six in 10 object to the plan. The party said last month it would not change the status of any existing grammar school unless parents voted for it.

Proposals for a grammar school in Milton Keynes, the only part of Buckinghamshire without a grammar system, have divided parents and local politicians since the scheme

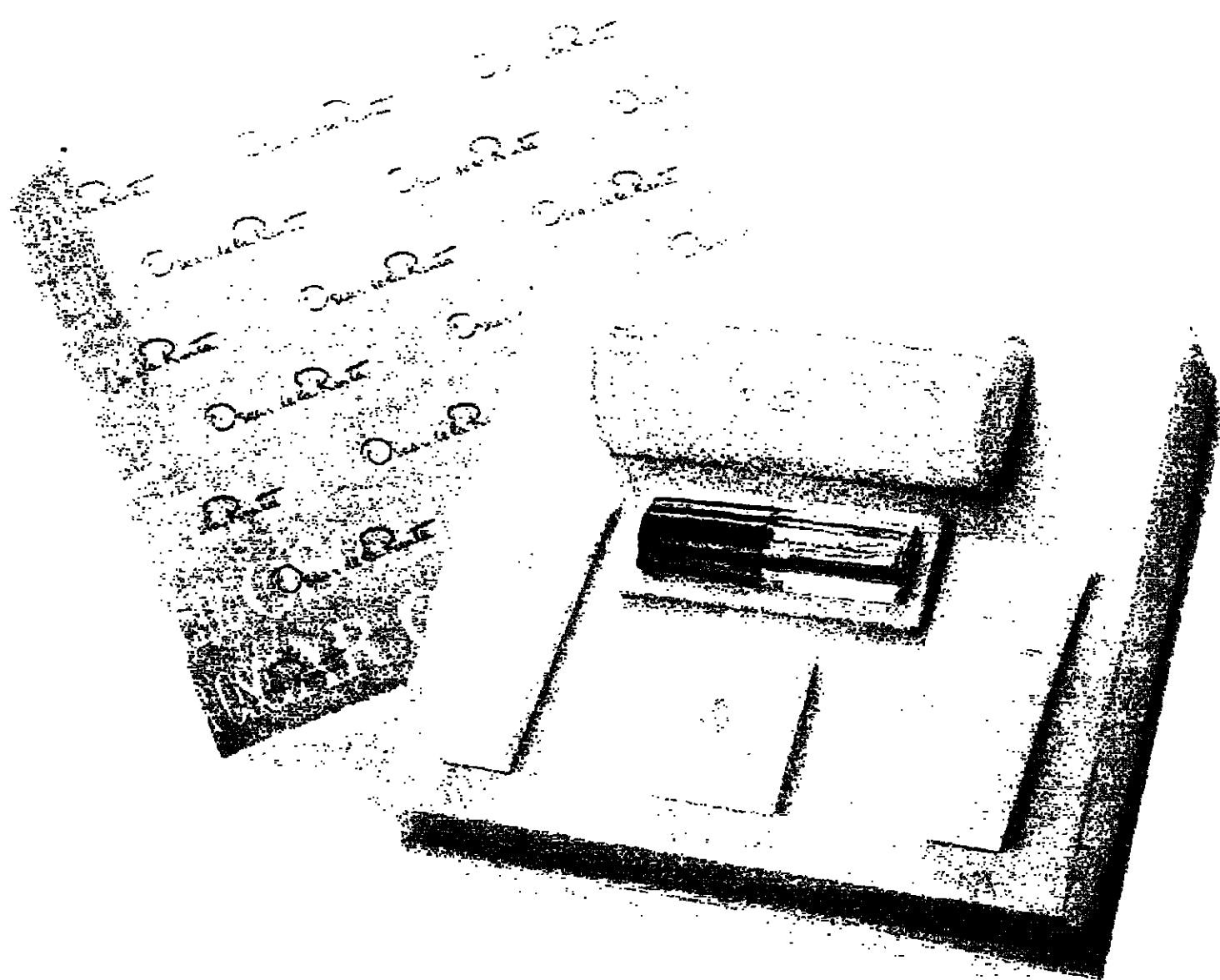
was mooted 10 years ago. Government approval has come only months before a general election and weeks before the handover of control of the city from Conservative-controlled Buckinghamshire County Council to a new Labour-run Milton Keynes unitary authority, following local government reorganisation.

The Labour leadership of the new authority insists the

county has no right to impose its will on a city for which it will soon have no responsibility. On Tuesday night, Milton Keynes Borough Council voted unanimously to continue to oppose the grammar school.

However, under education law, last week's go-ahead from Mrs Shephard means that the city's authority is obliged to put the plan into practice, subject to planning consent.

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MFI home works

politics

DAVID Aaronovitch

The lunacy of our asylum debate

You pay your money and you take your choice. In Billerica - if Teresa Gorman is to be believed - asylum-seekers are mostly East European men who, after having come over here to watch Sszpli FC in the UEFA Cup, decided that they wished to stay on at taxpayers' expense. In Islington, however, according to Jeremy Corbyn, this group is almost entirely made up of torture victims who have had their fiancés murdered in front of their very eyes.

Yesterday these two diametrically opposed versions of the same reality were laid out with some care. Teresa herself was splendidly attired in a pink-and-white check twin-set, which looked as though it had been run up from a very expensive National Trust tablecloth. She was cross that the courts had found in favour of a group of asylum-seekers, ruling that councils should provide them with basic amenities, now that government itself no longer did.

"Meals on Wheels have to take food to them!" she told horrified MPs. "They have to be given a packed lunch, in case they go out to do a bit of shopping during the day!" Worse, they were given snacks as well. "Snacks!" repeated Ms Gorman for effect. "Snacks!" echoed scandalised members, many of whom can only dream of snacks. Furthermore, these folk needed "hygiene packs", including "toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, flannel and deodorants!"

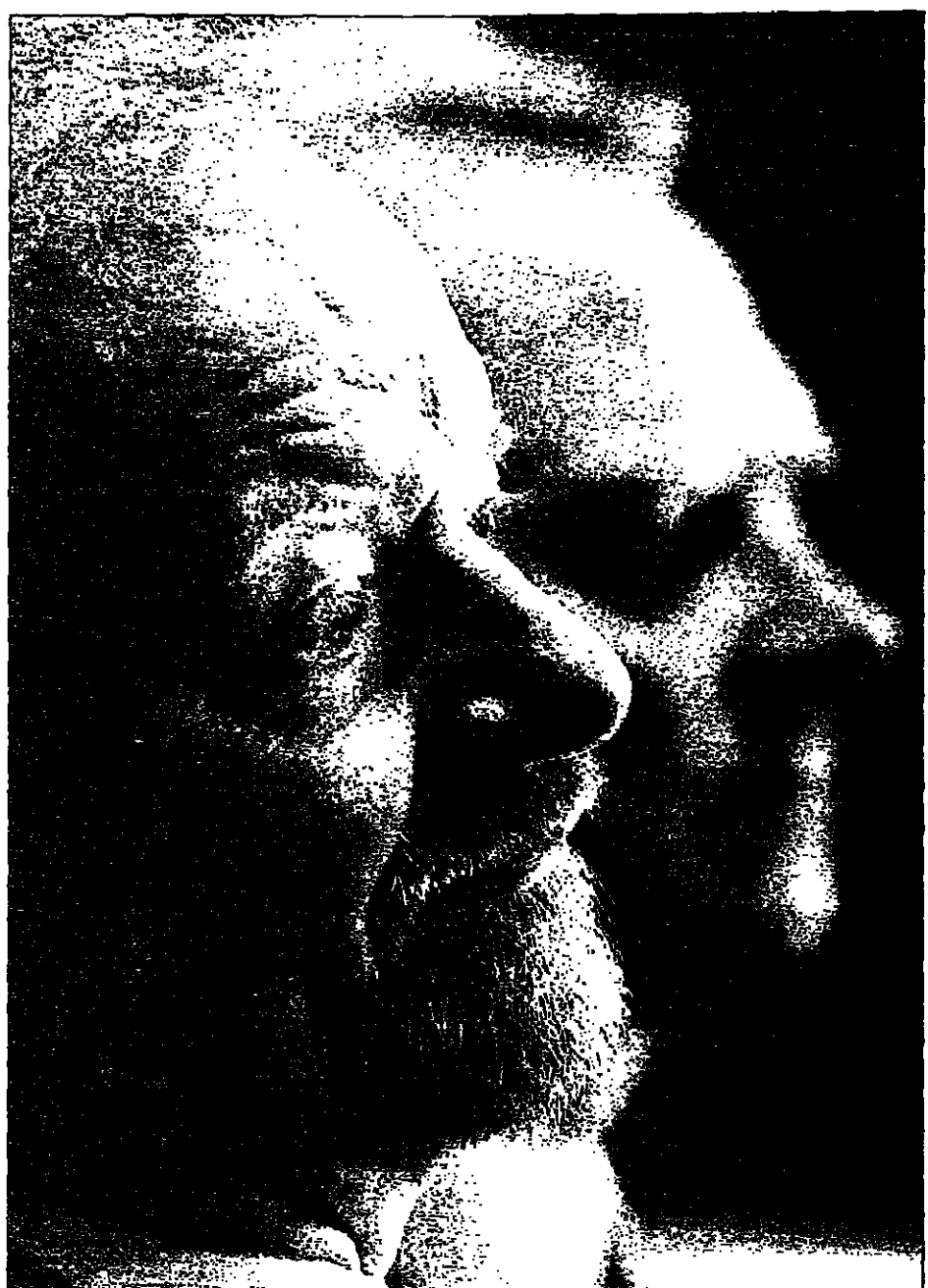
The burden of providing all this personal freshness fell upon the poor old people of Westminster, many of whom live on small pensions in Peabody estates and ask nothing from the state, save to be let alone. "Why should elderly people, managing on their modest incomes, fork out for these people who are simply parasites?" she concluded.

Jeremy's case was that we had an obligation to look after those who seek asylum in our country (although if the country is half as bad as Jeremy always says it is, it is amazing that anyone ever bothers). He was interrupted by the choleric Christopher Gill (C. Ludlow) who demanded to know what mandate Mr Corbyn had from the British people "to share their citizenship with foreigners?"

As Mr Corbyn struggled with this piece of abistorical xenophobia, I was momentarily distracted by the appearance of a steatopygous Sudanese tribeswoman in multi-coloured djellaba and brass girdle, who sat silently at the end of the Tory benches. Closer examination showed it to be the Medway sex goddess, Peggy Fenner, come to show solidarity with the Third World. When she was sure that everyone in the Chamber had seen her, she departed again.

All this time David Shaw, the Dover MP - whose majority is tiny, but whose desire to hold on to his seat is overwhelming - had been twitching in preparation for his own intervention in the debate. At last his moment arrived. He did not, he began, "want to see people taking advantage of our compassion".

Now, you'd have to get up pretty early in the morning to take advantage of Mr Shaw's compassion, as the following exchange with fellow Tory Tony Marlow indicates. Shaw had just explained to the House that even with brutal dictators there were limits to what could be done. "We cannot take the whole population of Iraq!" he stormed. Marlow intervened: "Why don't they go to Jordan?" he asked. "Why do they have to travel a whole continent to get away?" Shaw concurred, easily. So the next time you see the whole population of Iraq at Dover ferry terminal, trying to enter the country, use your compassion and point out the sign saying "Jordan: 2,000 miles".



Party ties: Cook (left) and Maclennan sealing their pact Photograph: Andrew Suuman

Lib-Lab pledge to overhaul the constitution

Anthony Bevis
Political Editor

Labour yesterday promised to offer voters a straight choice between the current, first-past-the-post system and a system of proportional representation in time for a new millennium election.

Some senior party figures appear to have dropped their previous preference for the alternative system, which is not a proportional voting system. The alternative vote ensures that all MPs are elected by a majority following the elimination of candidates who come bottom of the poll, and a redistribution of voters' second preferences.

Liberal Democrats were yesterday delighted by the agreement between the parties, which they regarded as a climb-down by some senior Labour opponents of electoral reform.

The decision was part of a practical package of constitutional change to "renew democracy", tied up between Labour and the Liberal Democrats yesterday. But the two parties warned that the prerequisite for reform was ending the Conservative culture of the "one-party state", and a change of government at the next election.

The agreement could also overcome the practical obstacles that blocked previous attempts

at reform. Bob Maclennan, the Liberal Democrat spokesman, said yesterday that the history of constitutional struggle was littered with failure.

In the Sixties," he said, "a Labour government with a huge majority failed to reform the House of Lords. In the Seventies, plans for devolution came to naught. Our two parties have to do better."

Robin Cook, shadow Foreign Secretary and the man who led the Labour negotiating team, said: "Both parties have gained from reaching agreement on a comprehensive programme of reform which offers each of us a better prospect of achieving the objectives of our policies on the constitution."

The areas of agreement covered not only devolution, electoral reform, and the removal of the right of hereditary peers to sit and speak in the House of Lords, but also a code of human rights, freedom of information, the independence of the national statistical service, greater scrutiny and accountability for quangos, statutory force for the civil service code, and a modernisation programme for the Commons.

While the Liberal Democrats disagreed with Labour's proposal to hold two referenda on Scottish devolution, one on the

setting-up of a parliament and another on its powers to vary taxes, yesterday's agreement said they "would not seek to frustrate or delay referendum legislation".

Yesterday's statement said that once the initial referendum had been carried, "both parties would support legislation to establish the Scottish parliament within the first session of Parliament after the general election" - by the summer of 1998.

Both a Scottish parliament and a Welsh assembly would be elected on an additional member system; the proportional voting system which retains constituency seats, but gives an additional proportion of places to the "best losers" among defeated candidates. That system will be one of the options for an electoral commission that would be given a year in which to propose a referendum choice between the existing first-past-the-post system and "one specific proportional alternative" that would "command broad consensus among proponents of proportional representation."

Mr Cook said he anticipated that the referendum, and any subsequent legislation could take place "in good time" for PR to be introduced for the following general election.

Leading article, page 15

Criticised councils turn over a new leaf

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

Councils criticised for their poor record in providing services have improved remarkably over the past year, according to the Audit Commission's annual local-authority performance indicators.

The figures suggest that nothing works better in improving a council's performance than local publicity resulting from finishing bottom of the commission's published annual league tables.

The commission, the Gov-

ernment's spending watchdog, says, for example, that the 15 authorities which took longest to relet empty council homes when the commission first produced performance figures three years ago, have improved their performance by 30 per cent and now take an average of 9.6 weeks to relet homes, rather than 13.5 weeks.

Similarly, the worst authorities collected only 81 per cent of the council tax due to them and now the average for the bad performers is 86 per cent. A spokesman for the commission

said: "Nobody wants to be at the bottom."

The commission highlights the fact that while overall performance is improving, there are still very large differences in performance between similar authorities. While many manage to complete all or nearly all their land searches, for people buying houses in the local area, within 10 working days, some barely manage to complete any.

Newham in East London does only 14 per cent in the allotted time, while neighbouring Waltham Forest manages 98.7 per cent. And prices vary widely, with Milton Keynes charging £113.50 for the service compared with £49 charged by another Buckinghamshire authority, Aylesbury Vale.

Similarly, while some authorities managed to assess more than 90 per cent of children in their area with special educational needs within the target time of 18 weeks - such as Newcastle, Southwark and Norfolk - others, like Manchester, Salford and Havering, did not assess any children within the allotted time.

No authority emerges as the best or worst in Britain, but it is possible to discern successful authorities within each group. The tables highlight Liverpool and Manchester as authorities not giving value for money while Birmingham, Knowsley and Croydon do well.

With so few councils now controlled by the Tories, comparisons of the parties' performance are difficult. However, Labour seized on the relatively poor performance of Westminster, one of the Tories' flagship councils, pointing out that

it spends £56.48 per head on refuse collection and disposal, compared with neighbouring Labour Camden's £22.46, and that Westminster has the highest benefits administration cost in the country of £266 per claimant per year.

Labour rather overstretched itself, however, when it claimed that Labour-controlled Thurrock in Essex had the best record for collecting council tax - 102 per cent of the amount due.

□ *The Local Performance Indicators*, 1995/6, volume 1 and 2: £15 each, Audit Commission.

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Peers misled over animal deaths

Ian Burrell

Earl Howe, the Under-Secretary of State for Defence, made a personal statement to the House of Lords yesterday warning that Parliament may have been misled over the mysterious deaths of large numbers of animals in the Gulf War.

The statement, which amounted to an apology, followed a report in yesterday's *Independent* over experiments by British scientists, who the minister claimed had examined the carcasses and found that the animals died of natural causes.

The scientists, at Edinburgh's Centre for Tropical Veterinary

Medicine, revealed they had no record of the work being done.

Troops who served in the Gulf believe the animals may have been killed by pesticides or as a result of the use of chemical or biological weapons.

The Countess of Mar, a crossbench peer, had asked the minister last July whether there was any evidence that the dead animals had been exposed to nerve gas.

Earl Howe said in reply: "Samples from dead animals were sent back to the Edinburgh Veterinary School and Tropical Medicine Centre [sic] and all were found to have died of natural causes or such things as eating vehicle batteries."

Yesterday the minister told the House that the Ministry of Defence now doubted that this was true and that an investigation was under way to establish the facts. He said: "On Thursday last week I was telephoned in the House by a journalist who told me that his inquiries had led him to believe that my written answers to the noble Countess, Lady Mar on 4th June and 5th July last year, about the deaths of animals during the

Gulf War, were incorrect. I immediately set in hand an investigation.

"Early yesterday evening I received departmental advice that there is now considerable doubt over the accuracy of my answers. My Lords, this is a serious matter about which I felt it right to inform the House at the earliest opportunity."

The admission follows an apology in October by Nicholas Soames, the Armed Forces Minister, that he misled Parliament over the use of organophosphate pesticides in the Gulf. Lady Mar said: "How many more things are we being misled on? I remain absolutely convinced that chemical weapons were used on both sides."

She said troops who served in the Gulf had seen dead but unmarked animals lying on their sides as if they were asleep.

Lady Mar said that Earl Howe, who was clearly furious with his advisers, had personally apologised to her. She has been granted a meeting with the minister's advisers this afternoon at which she hopes to be given further information.



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ALL THE FESTIVAL FORM IN MONDAY'S BUMPER

The Sporting Life

Ferries all at sea over new safety rules

Randeep Ranesh
Transport Correspondent

British ferries may be scrapped, forced to cut the number of passengers they can carry or need major work to meet new safety standards issued next month by the Government.

Officials from the Marine Safety Agency, which certifies ships, have completed a review of all ferries sailing from the UK and have identified those craft most in need of work to meet the Government's targets.

The list contains vessels used by P&O, Stena and Sea France. Safety inspectors will not publish the full timetable of work required by the Government until 1 April.

The move comes exactly 10 years after the *Herald of Free Enterprise*, a roll-on roll-off (ro-ro) ferry owned by P&O, capsized as it left the Belgian port of Zeebrugge on the way to Dover, killing 194 men, women and children. The *Herald of Free Enterprise* sank in a storm off the Coast of West Africa while being towed to Thailand in the early 1990s.

The new safety measures go further than the existing 1990 world survivability standards. They will require UK-operating ro-ro ferries to be able to cope with 50 cms of water entering the car deck and stay afloat if holed beneath the waterline. The improvements will cost ferry firms millions of pounds.

Many older vessels could meet the higher standards by attaching "buoyancy blisters" to their hulls or erecting bulkheads on their car decks. The merger between the largest ferry operators, P&O and Stena, which has yet to be decided by the Government, would also allow older ships to be retired from passenger service and save them from an expensive refit.

Other ships can delay their time in dry dock by reducing the numbers they carry. The *Pride of Cherbourg*, owned by P&O, is



In the dock, P&O's *Pride of Suffolk* loading at Felixstowe. Under the new safety regulations, all ro-ro ferries must be modified by spring 1998

Photograph: Brian Harris

penned in to be overhauled this autumn. The company could avoid this by increasing the cargo space and halving the number of passengers – and put off its upgrade until 2001.

Other ships set to be over-

hauled this autumn include Sea France's *Matise* and P&O's *Pride of Hampshire*. Next year would see some newer ships – like P&O's *Pride of Suffolk* – upgraded.

A spokesman for P&O Eu-

ropean Ferries said: "We will do whatever is necessary to comply with the new regulations." Passenger groups said more could be done sooner. The Consumers' Association called for the Government to speed up

the new regulations so all ships are modified by spring 1998.

The CA added that industry standards require a typical cross-Channel ferry to be evacuated within 30 minutes. Yet it took 65 minutes for 842 volun-

teers to be evacuated in a government test in Dover.

The Herald Families Association, which campaigned to raise shipping safety standards, is disbanding in the light of the new regulations. "Time does not

heal the pain but we have felt that by doing something we have helped ease things for ourselves," said the association's deputy chairman, Peter Spooner, whose son was killed in the disaster.

Alert on drug residues in meat

Annabel Ferriman

Just when you thought it was safe to start eating meat again, a report published yesterday warns of another hazard – antibiotic residues in British pork and turkey.

Overuse of antibiotics in the rearing of livestock could ultimately mean there is no effective treatment for humans suffering from related infections, *Which?* magazine warns, as bacteria develop a resistance to familiar drugs.

Tests carried out by the Consumers' Association, and similar organisations in 15 countries, have revealed traces of antibiotics in European pork, turkey, veal and chicken.

The study reveals that Britain had the largest proportion of turkeys affected (7 per cent) and the third largest proportion of pork (4 per cent), after the Republic of Ireland (17 per cent) and Greece (8 per cent). No veal or beef from Britain was tested and none of its chicken samples was affected, however.

Farmers use antibiotics both to treat infection and to promote growth in animals, but their use as growth promoters has been restricted. In practice, however, closely related drugs are used in this way.

The presence of antibiotic residues in food not only increases the likelihood of resistance, but can also affect people who are allergic to antibiotics, and very high doses of one type of sulphonamide has been linked to thyroid cancer.

Sue Davies, the Consumers' Association's acting principal researcher, said: "Antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria are becoming more common. In 1995 over 87 per cent of one particular strain of salmonella was resistant to five common antibiotics. This is serious [because] the number of people who die from it is around ten times higher than for other types of salmonella. The options for treatment are now few."

Tim Lobstein, of the Food Commission in London, said: "If Sweden, Denmark and Germany's consumers with support from the veterinary profession, are prepared to press for better practices, then why not Britain?"

Conservationists to challenge £17m Cairngorms railway plan

Stephen Goodwin
Heritage Correspondent

Scottish Natural Heritage, the Government's nature adviser, was riding out a storm of protest yesterday after withdrawing its objection to a funicular railway up Cairn Gorm. The fate of the £17m project could now depend

on Brussels and the National Lottery.

Conservationists are preparing a challenge through Europe and the courts in order to safeguard the sub-arctic mountain environment, home to rare birds such as the dotterel and snow bunting.

"SNH has failed monum-

tally in its duty to protect the Scottish countryside," said Bill Wright, of the Cairngorms Campaign which may seek judicial review of the quango's behaviour over the railway.

Not surprisingly, the Chairlift Company was delighted with the decision, describing it as "an important milestone" in

the redevelopment of the Aviemore ski area. Hamish Swan, the company's chairman, said it was "a breakthrough for Highland tourism and the local community". An extra 50 jobs have been predicted.

The way is now clear for a formal agreement between SNH, the company, Highland and Is-

lands Enterprise which owns the land, and Highland Council setting legal safeguards for nature protection. Once that is signed, the Chairlift Company will set about raising the capital.

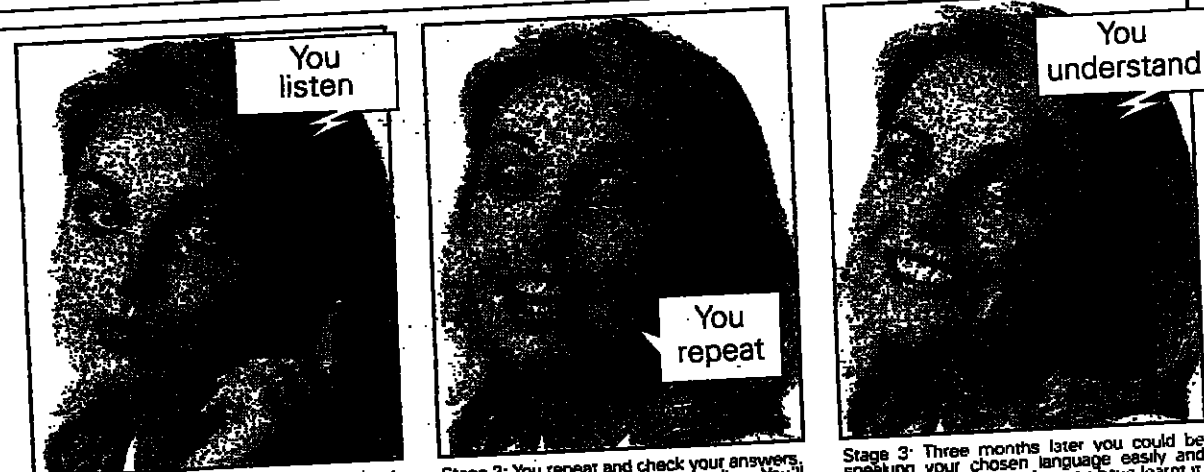
The 2km railway would run on 93 concrete pillars from the mountainside car park almost

to the summit of Cairn Gorm, at 1,245 metres one of Britain's highest mountains. It would replace antiquated chairlifts used by skiers and also provide a summer service to a summit visitor centre.

To meet SNH's objection to trippers spilling out on to the fragile mountain top, the com-

pany designed a totally enclosed system. Funicular passengers will not be allowed outside when they reach the visitor centre.

This bizarre arrangement was being trumpeted by SNH as likely to lead to less visitor pressure than the current "unmanaged chairlift access".



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THE PENSIONS REVOLUTION

Lilley the radical guesses 40 years ahead

Nic Ciccotti
Personal Finance Editor

The Government's proposals to privatise the basic state pension and scrap the earnings-related scheme, announced yesterday, is one of the most audacious plans for almost 20 years.

Peter Lilley, Secretary of State for Social Security, described his plans as "enabling pensioners to share in future economic growth ... and ultimately, to relieve taxpayers of their biggest burden."

Mr Lilley's department claimed the Basic Pension Plus plans, which involve paying young people £9 per week towards a personal pension from the moment they start work, will eventually save up to £40bn from the public spending bill by 2040. Department of Social Security officials argued that the cost of paying the basic state pension, plus income support to those on the poverty line, costs about £42bn a year at present. This figure is rising fast as more people reach retirement age and then go on to live longer.

By implementing this scheme, the total state pensions bill would be reduced to about £10bn in 40 years' time or so.

But Labour's pensions spokesman, John Denham, yesterday cast doubts on the Government's figures. He seized on DSS figures showing the cost of paying £9 weekly to young people's pensions would rise by £160m each year, spiralling to £7bn a year in about 40 years' time, to claim that existing taxpayers would be forced to foot the bill for this largesse.

Minister claims scheme will save taxpayers billions and help the old

The Government's proposals are the latest stage in a long-running retrenchment over state pensions. The retreat from a generously-funded state scheme, which began barely a year after the Tories took office in 1979, has continued unabated for more than 15 years.

The retreat from a generously funded state scheme has continued unabated for more than 15 years

In 1980 involved raising the basic pension only in line with inflation and not earnings. Because pay generally rises faster than inflation, this has meant the value of a basic state pension dropping from about 20 per cent of average earnings in 1979 to about 15 per cent today. This is predicted to fall to 10 per cent in 40 years' time.

The second step taken by the Government has involved the whittling away of Serps, the state-earnings-related system. When it was first introduced by Barbara Castle in 1978, at the end of the last Labour government, Serps was intended to add a further 25 per cent of average wages at retirement.

This too has been gradually stripped away, once again, by

Peter Tompkins, actuary at the accountancy firm Price Waterhouse, said someone on average earnings of £16,500 could expect £3,500 a year in addition to their state pension if Serps were fully linked to earnings. By 2040 this will drop to £1,400.

Although initial reports focused on the Government's abolition of Serps and its replacement with a 5 per cent National Insurance rebate, once again payable into a personal pension, this has been virtually accomplished already.

About 15 million people are now opted out of Serps, with just 6 million, mostly lower-paid workers, still contributing to the scheme.

The real debate, such as there is one, is over whether it

is cheaper for the taxpayer to provide the same level of benefits to pensioners under the new system than through the existing one.

Mr Lilley argued yesterday that the rising costs of meeting the £9 weekly commitment to young people would be funded by a combination of two factors. The first is that, unlike now, payments into a personal pension will be taxed. Whereas at present, for every £100 of contributions the Revenue pays £24 for basic taxpayers (£40 for those on the marginal rate), this will not happen in future.

The Government claims that young people will benefit from not having their pension taxed when it is finally paid. However, most governments' tax promises have tended to be at variance with the facts just a year or two after being made, never mind 40 years' time.

Mr Lilley also hopes that very minor economic growth – ahead of existing targets – would meet the remaining cost. Again, this depends on whether such growth can be maintained for 40 years.

A DSS spokesman said last night: "The rising costs are nothing to be scared of. We have already shown that we are capable of cutting the cost of pension provision, by our previous reforms of Serps and by the equalisation of state pension ages at 65. Assuming normal economic growth, we can afford the changes."

On the cost front, there is the additional question of how much the new personal pensions will cost.



Public savings: Paying young people £9 per week towards a personal pension scheme will save up to £40bn by 2040

Labour splits over Serps scheme Tories' vision: £175 a week and big savings

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

There is disagreement in the Labour ranks over whether the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme should be scrapped or not. Party policy commits a Labour government to keeping the scheme but the Labour chairman of the Social Security Select Committee, Frank Field, believes it should go.

Both sides in the argument agree that Serps has been run down over the years of Conservative government and that it no longer provides good value for money for most people. However, the party's social security spokeswoman, Harriet



Harman: Serps should stay

Harman, argues that it should be kept for anyone who wants to remain in it. Mr Field believes it should be replaced with com-

pulsory personal-insurance schemes.

A Labour government would be committed to keeping the same basic pension structure as exists at present, but, like the Conservatives, it would encourage more people to take up private schemes to top up their basic state pension. The Liberal Democrats, meanwhile, believe that Serps could be phased out but only after other safeguards have been put in place.

However, there is acknowledgement among Labour politicians that private pensions do not provide adequate returns for all investors. They say that someone earning between £10,000 and £12,000 would lose

a quarter of their savings through administration charges. Complex rules which exacerbate this problem should be simplified, they suggest.

Labour has promised to work with pension providers and to use competition between them in order to provide better pensions and to ensure proper security. In addition, those on low earnings would be entitled to a basic state pension linked to inflation under a Labour government, as they have been under the Conservatives.

Labour believes that the Conservatives' "apocalyptic" warnings about the growing numbers of pensioners in this country are overstated. Al-

though there will be a sharp increase between 2030 and 2040, it says, the number of people retiring in the next 20 years will be lower than in the past 20.

Under a Labour government new types of pension schemes could be encouraged, including programmes run by groups of employers or by a number of firms in the same industry. There could also be local schemes, possibly promoted by chambers of commerce.

Personal pensions under Labour could be linked to the party's plans for individual savings accounts. Pension companies would be encouraged to offer savings and life assurance to their members at competitive rates.

Under the Liberal Democrats, the basic state pension would remain, and occupational and private pensions should exist to add to the safety net the state provides. All workers would be covered by it, and there would be measures to protect lower-paid employees. Then Serps could be phased out, with earnings-related state pensions transferred over time to the private sector. However, the basic state pension would remain in state hands.

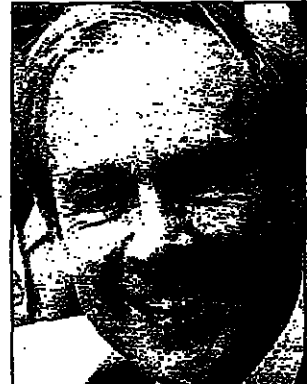
Fran Abrams

The state could save £40bn per year by 2040 under the Conservatives' new pension scheme, according to Peter Lilley, the Secretary of State for Social Security.

However, anyone over 20 today is unlikely to be affected by the new arrangements. Legislation would be passed towards the end of the next Parliament and phased in over the following 40 years.

Under the Basic Pension Plus programme, everyone would have to choose a personal pension plan from an approved company. They would then receive a National Insurance rebate of £9 per week, which would be paid into the fund in order to provide a basic state pension, regardless of how much they earned.

The basic pension would remain at current levels and be topped up to take account of inflation. If a person's fund was not sufficient to pay the basic pension, the Government



Lilley: Seeking big savings

If extra investment boosted economic growth by one-twentieth of 1 per cent per annum, the scheme would be self-financing, ministers said yesterday.

The scheme is designed to move Britain from the pay-as-you-go scheme, under which today's workers' contributions pay the pensions of those who have already retired, to one in which everyone builds up their own personal retirement fund. Over a generation, the amount held in private schemes would increase.

However, Labour claims the Government will not save any money until its first Basic Pension Plus generation retires in around 2040. Labour said last night that the scheme would cost £2.4bn in its first five years, with workers having to pay twice – once to fund their own schemes and once to fund those who had already retired.

The Government plans a Green Paper on which pension companies and other interested parties would be consulted.

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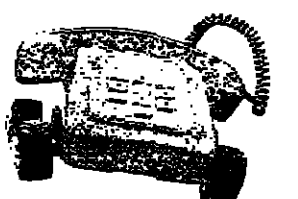
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Why the Right is going for the big idea

Nic Ciccotti

Why is the Government reforming the state pension system?

For several years now, there has been a growing argument over the so-called "demographic timebomb". This is the term used to describe forecasts that the UK population is ageing rapidly. The number of people of pensionable age is rising from 8.9 million in 1991 to an anticipated 13.5 million by 2030, according to research. At the same time, there will be a falling proportion of people in work to support them.

But why should my pension be affected?

Because the existing state pension scheme is based on a pay-as-you-go system, whereby we pay for those who are already retired. In turn, we hope our pensions will be met by future National Insurance contributions. But if less people are in work, it means it costs more to fund pensions or, the Government argues, they have to be cut instead.

So what is the Government doing?

In practice, the real value of state pensions has been falling for more than 15 years. This has mainly been achieved by linking benefits to inflation rather than

earnings, which rise faster. Much of these changes have taken place under the direction of Peter Lilley, the Secretary of State for Social Security.

What is the latest change?

Mr Lilley is proposing that, if the Conservatives are elected again, the Government should radically alter the state pension. He wants to abolish Serps, the state earnings-related element, and pay 5 per cent of national insurance into people's personal pensions instead. This is a continuation of what he has already been doing. He also wants to scrap the basic state pension, replacing it with a guaranteed £9 a week – again, into a personal pension. He hopes to cut the state's pension bill by £40bn by 2040, while guaranteeing the same inflation-adjusted levels of benefits as today.

Are there any problems with this?

There could be. The DSS admits that the cost will rise by £160m a year, reaching £7bn by 2040. It hopes the extra costs will be paid by better economic performance. But this is not guaranteed. There are also questions about whether personal pensions are cheaper to administer than the state system. One thing is certain, this is likely to prove a multi-billion pound bonanza for personal pension providers.

هكذا من الأصل

PM challenged to live on pensioner's monthly income

Glenda Cooper

Elizabeth Raybone is disgusted with the Prime Minister. She wants to challenge John Major to "come and live with me for a month. Leave your money and come and live on mine and then see how you manage. See how you'd cope."

Miss Raybone is 62, partially sighted and lives in a "two-up two-down" house in Gwent, South Wales. She receives income support and a disability allowance which comes to £78 a week. Everything has to be accounted for, but she says that her cat, Beauty, is her one luxury. She budgets £59 for her heating, mortgage, electricity, telephone bills, newspapers, television licence and insurance. The remaining £19 goes on food - mainly pulses and vegetables as they are cheap and filling. That way she can just about manage, if she spends time in the market shopping around for the best food bargains.

"I rarely eat meat - it is far too expensive. I might eat it once a fortnight, if I'm very lucky." But there are sometimes unforeseen problems which can

Keeping body and soul together is a daily struggle for Elizabeth Raybone

throw her budget out. "It's a question of trying to leave something for a month or two, hope that they don't push me and try to make it up by cutting down on food or heating."

"Heating, you can save by wrapping yourself up in a blanket on a chair or just going to bed of course."

But she is terrified of running into debt. "I've seen too many people fall into debt and they just can't get out. If I fall behind in my mortgage payments I could lose my house as easy as pie. For something like the heating, well they can't switch you off in the winter, but come 1 March and they'll do it. At the moment I desperately need new carpets and curtains - but it is not something I can afford."

Miss Raybone did not go out to work but spent most of her life caring for her parents. "It was very hard as practically all

my life they were seriously ill and there were no facilities for carers. There was nothing at all. We just weren't able to save.

"If you had saved all your life then maybe you would be able to cope, but with two seriously ill parents it just wasn't possible."

She feels that politicians have failed to realise what sort of life many old people lead and says that yesterday's announcements probably amounts to no more than "election promises".

"If they would just put up the pension £10 or £15 it would make a difference," she said.

"But when you're on £700 a week you don't know what it is like on £70. You're counting each penny - and if milk goes up a penny then you have to find that penny from somewhere else. They wouldn't be able to cope."



Tight budget: Elizabeth Raybone from Gwent, South Wales, with her cat, Beauty, which she describes as her one luxury

Photograph: Rob Stratton

Retiring type just manages to make ends meet

Glenda Cooper

At first Rachel Notley's late husband did not want her to go to work - "It just wasn't done then". Now she is grateful that she managed to persuade him to let her, for otherwise she does not know how she would survive on just a state pension.

Married in 1934, it was not until the 1960s that she went out to work for Age Concern after bringing up her children and caring for her in-laws.

She took out an occupational pension at the time because "it seemed like a sensible idea". Now she is supremely thankful she did.

Mrs Notley, 83, lives on £155. £160 a week, compared with the normal state pension of £61.15. Her occupational pension gives her around £65 a week after tax, her state pension is £82, higher than normal, because her husband worked until the age of 68, as she did, and she also gets a small amount from her savings bond and attendance allowance. She also has money in a building society and is in the process of purchasing the freehold on her flat.

Her outgoings include, council tax of £41 a month, £8 a month for gas "although I try not to put it on so much", the electricity (£12) and her car (£20), which she needs to get around because of her disability following a hip operation. Her attendance allowance of £42 allows her to employ someone to come in and do things like the cleaning, which she cannot manage. "I realise that al-

... While a works pension makes Rachel Notley extremely thankful

though I have to make do, I am not as badly off as I could be. I can run a car although I have to give up other things and make sure I get my priorities right. But I cannot see how you could eat properly on a state pension," she said.

"I am so thankful. If I didn't have my own pension I would be on housing benefit and everything. I'm lucky as well because I have some small savings from when my husband died and I sold the house."

"You do have to think 'Gosh, that's a bit expensive, if you're looking at a new pair of shoes. Even on my income, if you want something like a new winter coat, unless you go to Oxford you can't buy a decent one for under £100. Sometimes I go shopping and I see people with stuff in their trolley which comes to more than my weekly income."

She thinks politicians have not thought the pensions system through. "I can't see what the Government are going to do. There are a lot more older active people like me around now and I can't see how anybody relies on just their pension. You couldn't really manage on £61 per week and I know people do but it is a pretty rotten life, particularly after paying into the system all your life."

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international

Protesters fear Berisha's army is out for blood

Emma Daly
in Tirana

A major security operation, including soldiers equipped with tanks and armoured personnel carriers, was under way throughout southern Albania yesterday, but armed civilians appeared to come out ahead in early fighting.

Protesters in the southern port of Saranda fired assault rifles and a commandeered tank at jets flying overhead.

Journalists in Saranda saw Chinese-made MIG-15 warplanes drop a bomb next to two houses in the village of Delvina, near Saranda, and saw smoke from two more bombs. About 400 families, most belonging to Albania's ethnic Greek minority, live in the town. It was not clear if anyone was hurt.

The Defence Ministry denied there had been any order to fire against civilians. But on Tuesday, the crew of an Albanian military jet who landed in Italy seeking political asylum said they had been given orders to bomb civilian targets near the southern town of Gjirokastra, 125 miles south of Tirana.

About 400 hooded and armed protesters are guarding the entrance to the port of

Saranda, which is under the control of the insurgents. They have set up road blocks on the main road into the city. Trucks and cars were seen carrying weapons and explosives into the town, most of it looted from army warehouses in the region. In the town of Shtati, four

The West launched diplomatic moves to find a political solution to the crisis, ruling out military intervention. The Dutch Foreign Minister will travel to Tirana tomorrow to seek talks between the government and opposition, and the Council of Europe is to send a mission there today. Europe and the US condemned President Berisha. Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, called him "dictatorial".

men were reported injured in a battle with army troops. The fight apparently broke out when four truckloads of troops opened fire on a roadblock.

Vlora, the centre of anti-government protests, has yet to come under attack according to residents contacted by telephone. They said most civilians were staying indoors fearful of the military holding the main road north and of the armed locals leading the protest.

Gunmen are in position on rooftops in the town, they said. The defenders of Vlora are believed to be well organised and have shored up positions outside the town.

Many Albanians fear that President Sali Berisha will aim at a bloody victory rather than political compromise in Vlora and Saranda. But Western diplomats say the army is poorly equipped and cannot be relied on to enforce the President's will.

Among the soldiers are many conscripts who invested their meagre wages in the pyramid schemes whose collapse sparked the unrest in January.

The police are another matter. Most come from the north, home of Mr Berisha, and are loyal to him. The regular police have been put under command of the Shik, the secret police.

Its members are much in evidence around Tirana in buildings frequented by opposition and the media.

The capital is quiet. However, the calm imposed by the state of emergency, which includes a night-time curfew and press censorship, has not calmed the fears of those who know they are seen as enemies by the government.



Tanked up: An Albanian with a rocket-propelled grenade waves to comrades driving armour seized from the army

Photograph: Reuters

Tribal tension splits open Albania

Andrew Gumbel

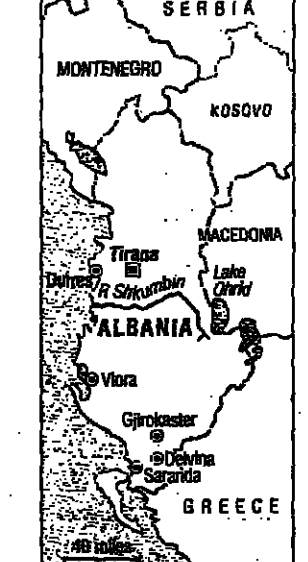
The conflict pitting the Albanian government against angry armed rebels in the south has split the country in two along a notorious historical and cultural fault line, raising the very real possibility of civil war or even partition in the event of a protracted stand-off.

Albania has traditionally been divided into two tribal groups: the Ghegs who live in the north and spread into Kosovo and western Macedonia, and the Tosks from the south. Their differences are primarily linguistic: the Ghegs speak a rougher, less sophisticated variety of Albanian, but they are noticeable also in levels of education, living habits and religious practice.

The differences have seethed beneath the surface of Albanian politics since the country won independence from the Ottoman empire in 1912. They go a long way to explain why Enver Hoxha, the country's post-war Stalinist dictator, became so paranoid about Albania's sovereignty and the risk of subversion from abroad. Now they weigh heavily on President Sali Berisha, a typical Gheg born in a northern village, as he struggles to assert his authority on the half of the country with which he has little cultural connection.

The north-south dividing line is generally considered to be the river Shkumbin, which springs from Lake Ohrid on the border with southern Macedonia and flows in a straight line across the country before draining into the Adriatic half way between the country's two main ports, Durres to the north and Vlora to the south. This is also the frontline of the present conflict.

Tirana, the Albanian capital, belongs geographically in the north but by temperament is very much a part of the south - highly cultured, open to the outside world and suspicious of the secretive, essentially mafia world of extended families and blood feuds that still operates in the north.



One of the reasons Mr Berisha was successful in portraying himself as a staunch anti-Communist is because he came from the opposite end of the country from Hoxha, who was born in Gjirokastra on the Greek border. Once installed as president in 1992, Mr Berisha brought thousands of villagers down from the north to take up

jobs in ministries and in the security forces, especially the police and the Shik secret police. Opposition parties, particularly the Socialists, have retained their heartland in the south - for cultural as well as political reasons - and strongly resent the influx of "northern savages" into the country's power structure. Whenever demonstrations have been violently broken up by police the anonymous assailants are invariably described as talking with thick northern accents.

Organised crime in Albania is also divided on tribal lines. Intelligence experts believe the Ghegs are involved in trafficking drugs and contraband cigarettes, using their secret networks - relying at least in part on Gheg state officials - to bring merchandise across the mountains from Kosovo and out

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Swiss to give £3bn to victims of Nazis

Louise Jury

Switzerland crumbled under the weight of international pressure yesterday and announced plans to endow a £3bn foundation for victims of Nazi genocide.

In a move which stunned and delighted critics, President Arnold Koller said the country should set up the fund "to do some good to those who endured unspeakable sufferings 50 years ago". Only two months ago, the then Swiss president, Jean-Pascal Delamuraz, condemned Jewish lobbying as "blackmail" and said claims for a compensation fund would be an "admission of guilt".



Koller: Stunned the critics

Switzerland should do some good for those who endured unspeakable sufferings 50 years ago

But with threats that Swiss businesses would be boycotted unless the question of "lost" Jewish bank accounts and war-time gold dealing was addressed, politicians and diplomats have been forced to meet the growing crisis head-on.

President Koller told a special session of parliament that the government intended to use a new, more realistic valuation of Swiss gold holdings as the basis for the fund.

With sound investment, the Swiss Foundation for Solidarity could enjoy an income of up to several hundred million pounds a year.

The fund would "reinforce Switzerland's humanitarian tradition and prove our gratitude for having been spared during two world wars," he said.

It would help not only Holocaust survivors but "victims of poverty and catastrophes, of genocide and other severe breaches of human rights".

The Swiss National Bank said gold would be sold over 10 years to fund the scheme, while avoiding hitting the world gold market. The gold price nevertheless dropped, about \$4 (£2.50) an ounce to \$354 (£221).

Switzerland has been under growing pressure since newly released documents indicated it had not always helped Nazi victims and their families trace money placed in Switzerland before the Second World War. It also faced criticism for using its neutrality in the conflict to deal tons of Nazi gold.

Mr Koller admitted that the Swiss government initially underestimated the criticism and had failed to address it with "sufficient sensitivity".

Now, the new fund, to be established by next year to mark the 150th anniversary of the modern Swiss constitution, will supplement a humanitarian fund already endowed with £43m by leading Swiss banks. The Swiss National Bank said yesterday that it would match the other banks' donation.

The British Labour MP Greenville Janner, chair of the Holocaust Educational Trust, said he was delighted.

He described the move as an "honourable, pre-emptive strike," because Switzerland knew it would face severe criticism from its own historical inquiry and from an American inquiry on Swiss financial dealings by Ambassador Eisenstat which reports later this month.

"They don't want to be the pariah of Europe, therefore they have proposed to do what is right and set up this fund."

"It's very pleasant. It's another melting of the glacier." An Israeli government spokesman Avraham Burg said: "I think it is a very important and significant step in the right direction. It is not the end of the trip."

Peter Feldmajer, leader of the Jewish community in Hungary, which has also voted to set aside £15m for Holocaust survivors, said the offer was "approximately what had been taken from European Jewry".

However, the Swiss proposal requires parliamentary approval and will face opposition. One right-winger, Christoph Blocher, said the government had "lost its head". Many older Swiss have found it difficult to accept criticism.

Rolf Bloch, president of the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities, said he was delighted but the "huge amount" of money would upset some people. "We have to convince the Swiss people it is the right thing to do."

Argentina has become the latest country to act on the question of Nazi gold. President Carlos Menem has ordered his central bank archives to be opened to investigate whether Nazi funds were deposited.

Leading article, page 15



Last stand: Police firing water cannons at thousands of protesters in Dannenberg to clear a road for the shipment of nuclear-waste containers

Photograph: Reuters

Nuclear protesters bow to the inevitable

Imre Karacs
Gorleben

Four youths dangling from trees held up 30,000 German troops and policemen in Robocop body armour for several hours yesterday, before ultimately succumbing. The Battle of Gorleben ended in triumph for the state when six lorries towing the 100-tonne nuclear containers reached the security of the medium term waste disposal site yesterday afternoon.

It was a Pyrrhic victory, in which 150 demonstrators were injured, the region's famed heath was enveloped in the acrid fume of burning tyres, and the authorities bickered about who should pick up the 100m mark bill. The government of Lower Saxony hinted this might have been the last trip to its cursed nuclear cemetery.

The operation began at 5am sharp. At Dannenberg station, where the containers had been loaded on to reinforced trailers, the water cannons

opened fire, dousing some 4,000 demonstrators sitting on the road. Then armoured bulldozers charged into the crowd. Five policemen were injured in the ensuing scuffles.

The demonstrators retreated. It was still early morning, and the road to Gorleben seemed to be wide open. But protesters were about to fight back.

In the dead of night, the two oak trees at the entrance of the road had been turned into a victory arch, linked by a huge banner and a web of mount-

aineering ropes. Along them four environmentalists were sliding to and fro, clutching the ropes with one hand and their mobile phones with the other.

That was at 4am, but the troops had come prepared for any confrontation. They had APCs, water cannons, a fleet of helicopters. What they lacked was a long ladder.

Reinforcements were sent for. Eight helicopter gunships flew past in formation, crack troops marched below, followed by military hardware.

When that did not work, the state called in its nuclear weapon. The first of the deadly trucks pulled up. Five policemen climbed on top of the huge casket, one grabbing the lowest tree dweller by her feet. The others severed her support with long wire cutters. And so they were plucked out, one by one.

By 3pm the convoys were behind the electric fences of Gorleben, where the castrics will be buried in a disused salt mine. What happens then to the radioactive end-product, nobody knows.

Turks try to sweet talk EU

Christopher de Bellaigue
Ankara

Tansu Ciller, the Turkish Foreign Minister, will answer critics of Turkey's application to join the EU when she hosts a meeting for European diplomats today. She is to address ambassadors from the EU's 15 member-states to try to nudge Turkey into the running for enlargement of the union.

Her sermon, delivered in reassuring European terms, will need to be even more palatable than the marinated shish. Earlier this week Ms Ciller and other Turkish Europhiles were reminded of obstacles on its path to membership when figures from Europe's Christian Democrat parties, meeting in Brussels, appeared to dismiss the possibility of Turkey joining the list of other nations with which the EU is to begin entry negotiations. In the words of

Romano Prodi, the Italian Prime Minister: "It [the meeting] was unanimous against Turkish membership."

Ms Ciller must also divert her guests from speculation that Turkey may soon embrace a different and now devalued European tradition: a military coup. On Friday Turkey's generals slapped down attempts by Necmettin Erbakan, the Prime Minister, to make Turkey more like the Middle East. The Army staged its most dramatic intervention for 14 years and demanded a return to the secular order institutionalised by Turkey's founding father, Atatürk.

The generals affirmed their adherence to the ideal of European integration, but may have over-estimated Europe's susceptibility to claims that the military are the guardians of Turkish democracy. While Europeans feel broad sympathy for

Turkey's desire to remain secular, the Army's more draconian demands - for example, the enforcement of a ban on Islamic style beards and clothing - are considered redolent of another, less libertarian Europe. In the name of integration, say some, the military has confirmed Turkey's unsuitability for membership of the club.

Turkey may have been guilty of other misjudgements. When Ms Ciller, as Prime Minister, sweet-talked the European parliament into ratifying a customs union accord with Turkey, she promised to improve Turkey's human-rights record but failed to deliver. Violations, especially in connection with the war against Kurdish separatists, so much that they blocked money which the EU had promised Turkey.

The Turks regard this as humbug. In 1989, when its application for European Com-

munity membership was deferred, Turkey's unsuitability was explained in largely economic terms; its human-rights record was afforded little prominence. Now, while Turkey has the highest growth rate of any OECD country, attention has switched. The Turks think they know why: Europe, they claim, overlooked human-rights abuses as long as Turkey provided security on Europe's eastern border. Now, as former Warsaw Pact nations prepare to leapfrog into the EU, offending Turkey appears less perilous.

The main obstacle to Turkey's European aspirations is relations with Greece, which is blocking EU funds promised to help Turkey acclimatise to the customs union. The Greeks want assurances that Cyprus will enter the EU - on their terms. In response, the Turks, who disagree, have threatened to derail plans for Nato expansion.

Koreans meet in peace

US and North and South Korean officials began talks that mediators hope will lead to peace on the peninsula. Delegations gathered in a New York hotel for a "joint briefing" by the US and South Korea on proposals for talks aimed at formally ending the Korean War. It is the first time since 1972 that North and South Koreans have sat in the same room to talk peace.

AP - New York

Santer neutral in Renault row

Renault did not follow the spirit of EU laws in moving to close a car plant in Belgium, Jacques Santer, European Commission president, said. But the Commission was not saying specifically whether it believed Renault had broken EU laws relating to how management consulted with workers in the event of a closure.

Reuters - Brussels

Yeltsin faces his health critics

President Boris Yeltsin today faces a test of his ability to soldier on when he delivers his state-of-the-nation address. It is the most important milestone in his second term and will be a measure of his health after his by-pass operation and pneumonia.

Phil Reeves - Moscow

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obituaries / gazette

Jarmil Burghauser

The name of Jarmil Burghauser is well known internationally, since he is Dvorak's "Kochel".

For many years now the confusion in the opus numbering of Dvorak's music, caused by misallocation on the part of the composer's German publisher Fritz Simrock, has been corrected by the use of "B" numbers, as is done through the "K" numbers in the case of Mozart. It was in 1960 that Burghauser's *Antonin Dvorak: thematically catalog, bibliographie, prehled zivoty* ("Antonin Dvorak: thematic catalogue, bibliography, survey of life and work") was published in Prague and immediately placed alongside those of Schindler for Bach, Hoboken for Haydn, Köchel for Mozart and Kinsky for Beethoven, as the definitive work of reference. As if such a monumental undertaking was not enough, Burghauser's life was lived to the full in many fields of activity, not all of them musical.

Born Jarmil Mokry in Pisek in south Bohemia, in 1921, he was taught music from the age of six and had embarked upon his first compositions by the age of 12. Formal study in composition came in 1933, when he became a private pupil first of Jaroslav Křiváček and then of Otakar Jeremiáš from 1937 until 1941. He entered the Prague Conservatoire in 1941, where his musical training included conducting under Metod Dolžal and Pavel Dedeček. On graduation three years later he was admitted for a further two years to the advanced conducting course of the great Václav Talich.

His early works had already begun to receive performances, and the *Adagio* and *Furiant* from his Symphony No 2 in D minor were broadcast by Czech Radio in 1936 when he was still 15 years old. By 1942 concerts of his works were given in Prague, first under the auspices of the organisation Pritomnost ("The Present"), with which he remained associated throughout his life. More significant recognition came in 1946 when the Prague Symphony Orchestra under Václav Smetáček performed his cantata *Urpni a vzkršení* ("Suffering and Resurrection") based on texts from the Kralice Bible.

Burghauser also showed an early interest in musical history and research, entering Charles University to study musicology, under Josef Huttr, and psychology. The completion of his studies coincided with the advent of Communist control in Czechoslovakia in 1948. As one who refused to embrace the new political regime, openly remaining true also to his Christian beliefs, he was denied graduation. Indeed, like many Czechs, he received his doctoral degree only in 1991, after the fall of the totalitarian regime.

From 1946 to 1950, he held the post of Chorus Master of the opera, at the National Theatre in Prague, where he worked alongside many of the great figures in Czech music, including Talich. It was in 1950 that his change of name to Burghauser, the maiden name of his mother, a distinguished painter divorced from his father, was officially sanctioned by the authorities. In the same year his second opera, *Lakomec* ("The Miser"), based on Molière to a libretto by Ludek Mandaus, was produced in Liberec.

Although Burghauser also taught at the Prague Academy of Musical Arts from 1946 to 1949 and served as the programme planner for the cham-

ber opera in the mid-1940s, from 1953 he devoted himself in music exclusively to composition and musicology. He was employed for a time by the Czech State Film Studios and he became a member of the editorial boards of the Dvorak, Fibich and Janacek complete editions, positions that he held until the end of his life.

His work for the Dvorak Edition is another of his monuments. He was appointed to that board before the death of his father-in-law, Otakar Sourek, Dvorak's first biographer, in 1956. The first volumes appeared in 1955 and the work remains in progress. In more recent times his work on the Janacek Edition has come in for criticism, particularly in his attempts to "simplify" some of Janacek's notation. In 1964 he was appointed Director of the music drama section of the Union of Composers, in that period of easing of political oppression that led to the Dubcek era and subsequently the tragic events of 1968.

Like many of his fellow artists, Burghauser became a victim of the post-1968 backlash; the unique recordings of many of his works in the archives of Czech Radio were wilfully destroyed. His name was removed from the published list of the editorial board of the Dvorak Edition, although he continued to work as a member. He was prevented from travelling and was able to continue composing only by using the pseudonym Michal Hajku until the political situation began to ease.

Under this name his *Rozmberk Sita* appeared in 1972 and his *Guitar Concerto* in 1978. It was typical of him that, where Dvorak and musical matters were concerned, he was prepared to take on his political masters. To the end he campaigned for the erection of a statue to Dvorak where, amazingly, none yet exists.

His own music was first steeped in the legacy of his beloved Dvorak, as can be heard in his ballet music for *Honza a cer* ("Johnny and the Devil", 1954). However, the influence of both Novak and Martinu can be discerned in other of his works from the 1950s, with neo-classicism and the music of Prokofiev also finding sympathy. In 1957 came perhaps his most successful score, another three-act ballet, *Sluha dvou panu* ("Servant of Two Masters"), based on Goldoni and first staged at the National Theatre the following year.

As with most Czech composers, his native folk music found a place in his output, no better than in the *Five Czech Dances* for nonet of 1940, later arranged for wind quintet in 1955. Film and incidental music also featured significantly in his large output.

In the 1960s Burghauser's style in composition changed to embrace his own use of serial techniques, to which he gave the name "harmonic serialism". Works of this time include *Sedm rožků* ("Seven Reliefs", 1962) and *Cesky* ("The Ways", 1964), for strings, percussion, harp, guitar and cimbalom. He wrote about this method in *Cesky nový hudby* ("Ways of New Music", 1964). His largest work using this technique came in 1963-64 with his opera *Most* ("The Bridge"), staged in 1967.

In 1974 he revised his Symphony No 1 in G from 1933 and went on to write a number of chamber works during that and the next decade, as well as the

significant *Symphonic Fantasy: V zemi ceske* ("In the Czech Country", 1982).

However, more and more of his time became taken up with musicological work and writing. Of more than a dozen books, after his "Thematic Catalogue", perhaps the most significant are *Členi a hra pariturn* ("Reading and Playing Scores", 1960), written with Petr Eben and Leoš Janáček, and *Editorial Principles and Directions*, (1979), with Milan Solc. In 1991 he was a leading figure at the conferences to mark the 150th anniversary of Dvorak's birth, held in New Orleans, Saarbrücken and Prague, as well as at the Royal Musical Association Annual Conference in London. In 1993 he led the Czech delegation at the centenary celebrations of Dvorak's visit to Spillville in Iowa. To mark his 75th birthday, Supraphon issued a special CD of his works in October 1996.

Jarmil Burghauser was a member of a remarkable group of senior Czech composers, the Ponderníci, which meets every Monday in a Prague arts club. He was a lifelong member of the church of St Marketa in the Břevnov district of Prague, where he, Jan Hanus, the late Václav Smetáček, Karel Křiváček and Jiri Vyskočil ensured a high standard of music even throughout the restrictive years of the Communist era.

An active boy scout from his youth – the movement was prohibited during both the Nazi occupation and Communist years (except for a short period before 1968) – he was called upon to become the first Chief Scout after the Velvet Revolution in 1989. He remained as Chief Scout until 1994, by which time he could hand over a lively organisation to his successor.

He was the Chairman of the Dvorak Society in the Czech Republic and in 1974 was appointed one of the first Vice-Presidents of the Dvorak Society for Czech and Slovak Music, in Great Britain. Among his closest friends was the lead-



Burghauser: Dvorak scholarship

ing British Dvorak scholar, the late John Clapham. The following generation of Dvorak and Czech music researchers will remember him as the most generous and kind-hearted person, as well as the musicologist. Jarmil's Cave which was his Prague home. In later years he was greatly supported by the companionship of his near neighbour Jarmilka Hnevsova. The day after his death, the long-awaited second edition of his Dvorak "Thematic Catalogue" was published in Mason.

Jarmil Michael Mokry (Jarmil Burghauser), composer and musicologist: born Pisek 21 October 1921; married Vlada Soukova (marriage dissolved); died Prague 19 February 1997.



A genial Machiavelli: Chelmer, left, with Margaret Shepherd and Lord Poole after visiting Harold Macmillan in hospital, October 1963

Photograph: Hulton Getty

Lord Chelmer

Eric Chelmer was both an effective fund-raiser for the Conservative Party, as its Joint Treasurer from 1965 to 1977, and a formidable politician who never sought electoral office.

In 1973 he was lunched with the late George Hutchinson – one of the most astute commentators on Conservative politics at the time, and a former press secretary to Harold Macmillan. While we were having a post-prandial drink Hutchinson saw Chelmer across the room. "Come," he said, "and have a drink with the second most intelligent unelected Tory in politics. After Oliver Poole, of course." I had heard of Chelmer, but, as we walked across the room, I asked Hutchinson what made him so special. "He is the greatest fund-raiser in our party history, and he helped Harold make Alec Home Prime Minister."

After a suitable period of diffidence on my youthful part, I asked Chelmer what had made him so successful a fund-raiser and a useful ally of Macmillan in ensuring that R.A. Butler would not, in 1963, become

Prime Minister, and that Alec Home would. He replied shortly: "It was the mind of a soldier."

Chelmer had one unfulfilled ambition, to be a diplomat. But, in one of the rare moments of weakness in his life, he had agreed to become a solicitor and eventually joined his family firm. As with so many men of his generation, his life was interrupted by the Second World War: at the age of 30 he was a lieutenant-colonel in the Royal Artillery, having served in that desperate fight on the beaches of France after the Allies had landed for the final onslaught of Hitler's Germany, for which he won a Military Cross.

The defeat of Churchill in the 1945 general election brought the young Eric Edwards to think seriously of politics. Both he and his father forsook the Liberal tradition of the family, and became Conservatives. This was not an altogether pleasing development for the rest of the family, with whom the Liberal tradition was still strong. But Chelmer pursued his conversion to the extent of seeking a Conservative parliamentary nomination. He

failed to get the party vote in Southend but, in his determined way, went on to serve the party in many voluntary capacities. The Liberal past of his family and that of his school, Felsted, were quickly forgotten.

As he rose steadily through the ranks of the voluntary side of his party he attracted the attention of Harold Macmillan, always a brilliant spotter of talent. The Tory party was chronically short of funds, and Chelmer devised – in his capacity as deputy party chairman – a scheme by which at each party conference a list would be posted of quotas of subscription (all quotas were devised by himself and Oliver Poole, the first Lord Poole) so that it could be seen which constituencies had come up to the mark, and which had not. It was, like Chelmer himself, simple, with a certain obvious charm, and brutal. It was later to be developed into a more elaborate system of elegant intimidation by Lord Carrington, when he was chairman of the party.

Important though this was, however, Chelmer's most crucial role in politics was played out in 1963, when Harold Macmillan decided that his health would not allow him to continue as Prime Minister. Historians still dispute what, exactly, Macmillan's motives were, and what manoeuvres he undertook. Macmillan at one time or another supported Reginald Maudling, Iain Macleod and Quintin Hailsham as his successor; his one settled view was that R.A. Butler should not succeed him. His choice, finally, was for the Earl of Home. Two people, the late Margaret Shepherd, then Chairman of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations, and Chelmer, were despatched independently to sound out opinion and come back with the right answer. Chelmer was also sent by Macmillan to see Home, and inquire about his health. He had suffered tuberculosis in the 1930s and there were still worries about his fitness; the answer was satisfactory both to Macmillan and to Home.

As Macmillan's health deteriorated, Chelmer's great surprise to find that Chelmer (who had been ennobled by

Macmillan) reported that Conservative peers were overwhelmingly in favour of the then Lord Home as Macmillan's successor. But it is fair to say that Chelmer, with his background as a voluntary local Conservative worker, also travelled more than noble opinion. "The fact of the matter," he said to George Hutchinson and myself, "is that Tories love a lord."

Apart from his political influence, however, Chelmer had a wide range of financial and sporting concerns. He was on the boards of many companies, and he loved sailing. Regarded by many as a prototype of Machiavelli, he was regarded by others as the essence of geniality: he was probably both.

Patrick Cosgrave

Eric Cyril Boyd Edward, political party worker: born 9 October 1914; MC 1944; KJ 1954; Chairman, National Executive Committee of Conservative and Unionist Associations 1957-65; Joint Treasurer, Conservative Party 1965-77; created 1963 Baron Chelmer; married 1939 Enid Harvey (one son); died 3 March 1997.

Lady Sieff of Brimpton

Lily Sieff was one of the outstanding leaders of Jewish communal organisations in Great Britain and in Israel.

At the time of her death she was the Chairman of the British Friends of the Art Museum of Israel, a trustee of the British Friends of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, on the Council of the Institute of Jewish Affairs, a member of the Executive of the Arthritis and Rheumatism Council of Great Britain, on the Management Committee of the Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology and one of the leading spirits of Wizo (the World Zionist Organisation), where she served as trustee, patron, and in many executive positions for its various activities. There, and in many other areas, her great organisational skill and her questing spirit of generosity and concern for humanity manifested itself. Her life was a portrait of the

Jewish world in the 20th century. Born Lily Spatz in Lemberg, Poland, in 1930, she lived in a setting of comfort and privilege surrounded by a loving family. She was always shy, hiding behind a sofa when her father had visitors; and in due course hid that shyness within a structure of total organisation controlling every aspect of her public and private life.

When the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939, the Spatz family first moved into their country house. Then, some of them, including Lily, managed a spectacular escape by car to Czechoslovakia, where they crossed the border clandestinely. Eventually, through Romania, they found their way to Palestine, and Lily's love affair with that land began. She had moved from a comfortable life to a one-room flat in Tel Aviv, but felt happy in that new world. She learnt Hebrew, attended both

primary and high school in Tel Aviv, and expanded her knowledge of languages, which eventually brought her to Geneva, where she obtained her BA in Economic Science. By then, she spoke French, Hebrew, Polish, English and Italian, which she used for her art studies in Italy. She continued her studies in the Graduate Department of the London School of Economics.

Lily's first husband was Martin Moretzki, the son of close family friends in Poland who had also escaped to Israel. They married in 1954 and lived in Montreal and London until his death from cancer in 1958. Five years later she married, as her fourth wife, Marcus Sieff (now Lord Sieff of Brimpton and for many years the governing spirit of Marks and Spencer); and a new life began for her in London. Lily stood alongside Marcus in all phases of his work and

they shared all interests of concern in British business, Jewish and cultural life. She worked with great diligence for the Weizmann Institute in Israel, which recently honoured her with a place on their board.

Lily Sieff was surrounded by countless friends and a warm family; later, she re-established her links with the family in Poland. Still, she was lonely, with a shyness which could keep others at a distance. Israel and Jewish life after the Holocaust were abiding concerns. A short time ago, she took her daughter Daniela, a biological anthropologist, to Poland to examine the death camps, and to look for her old home. It no longer existed.

During this last period, with Marcus now ill, she remained by his side, the devoted, loyal wife and nurse. Her own illness came to her suddenly and unexpectedly, and her



Sieff: shy and loyal

courage and shining spirit during these final months were an inspiration.

Albert H. Friedlander

Pauline Lily Spatz, community leader: born Lemberg, Poland 16 July 1930; married 1954 Martin Moretzki (died 1958); 1963 Marcus Sieff (KJ 1971, created 1980 Baron Sieff of Brimpton; one daughter); died London 28 February 1997.

DEATHS

DEARIN: John, formerly Secretary of the Cavendish Laboratory, died suddenly on Sunday 23 February 1997 in London. Funeral service at Church of St. Andrew, Cambridge, on Monday 10 March at 2.30pm. Please send any donations to the National Cancer Research Fund or the British Heart Foundation, c/o Harry Williams & Sons, 7 Victoria Park, Cambridge CB4 3EL.

FOX: On 3 March 1997, peacefully, Margaret Alexandra (Alix), aged 88, widow of Thomas Fox, most loved and loving mother of Tom (deceased), Christopher, Clementine and Lynette, grandmother and great-grandmother. Funeral Tuesday 11 March, Langford Road, at 1.30pm. "Blessed are they who die in the Lord."

MINCHIN: On 28 February 1997 at Hare Lodge, Halesham, East Sussex, Evelyn Mary, aged 91 years, widow of Harry Minchin. A truly wonderful lady who always put the interests of others before her own. It was a privilege to have known her. Funeral service at Eastbourne Crematorium Main Chapel on Tuesday 11 March at 3.15pm. Flowers or donations for Raynolds Centre for Animal Welfare may be sent to Haine & Son Ltd, 19 South Street, Eastbourne.

ZEFF: On 25 February 1997 at home in Lewes, Richard (Zeff), aged 56

Births, Marriages & Deaths

years. Sadly missed by all his family and friends. Funeral service at Woodvale Crematorium, Brighton, on Friday 7 March 1997 at 10.30am. No flowers please but donations if desired to Save the Children Fund c/o Cooper & Son Funeral Services, 42 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2DD. 01273 475757.

Announcements for GAZETTE BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2011 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2012) or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at 50p a line (VAT extra). OTHER GAZETTE announcements (notices, functions, forthcoming marriages, Marriages) must be submitted in writing and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. Please include a daytime telephone number.

attends a concert in aid of St Christopher's Fellowship Howard House Appeal, at St James' Church, London W11. The Duchess of Kent, Patron, attends her portrait, followed by dinner, at Downing College, Cambridge. Changing of the Guard. The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 1pm. Nijmegen Congress, and attends the Institute of Remembrance's Annual Dinner at the Glasgow Theatre Hotel. The Duchess of Gloucester

Birthdays

Dr. Madge Adam, astronomer, 85; Miss Jean Bohn, actress, 61; Brigadier Michael Calvert, former SAS commander, 84; Mr William Davis, editor and publisher of High Life, 64; Miss Rita Dee, rock singer, 56; Mr Donald Dixon MP 68; Professor Sir Charles Frank, physicist, 86; Mr David Gilmore, rock guitarist, 51; Mr Richard Giordano, chairman, British Gas, 63; Sir Alistair Grant, chairman, Safeway, 60; Professor David Hendry, Professor of Economics, Oxford University 53; Professor Sir Raymond Hoffenberg, former President, Wolfson College, Oxford, 74; Miss Judy Lee, actress, 50; Mr Lorin Maazel, conductor, 67; Sir Hal Miller, former MP 68; Mr Malcolm Moss MP 54; Mr John Noakes, actor and television presenter, 63; Mr Richard Noble, world land speed record holder, 51; Mr Peter Rookwood, cricket, 41; Sir Ian Dixon Scott, former ambassador, 88; The Right Rev David Sheppard, Bishop of Liverpool, 68; Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, operatic soprano, 53; Mlle Valentina Nikolayeva Terekhova, choroanaut, 61; Dr David Whitaker, chairman, 51; Whitaker & Sons, 66; Miss Mary Wilson, singer, 53; Mrs Ann Winterford MP, 56; Sir Oliver Wright, former ambassador in Washington, 76.

Anniversaries

Births: Michelangelo (Michelagnolo Buonarroti), painter, sculptor and poet, 1475; Savonarola Cyrano de Bergence, novelist and playwright, 1619; Elizabeth Barrett Browning, poet, 1806; Frankie Howard (Francis Adams), comedian, 1922. Deaths: Francis Beaumont, playwright, 1616;

Louisa May Alcott, novelist, 1888; Gottlieb Daimler, mechanical engineer, 1900; John Philip Sousa, bandmaster and composer, 1932; David Lewy, (David) (David) composer and playwright, 1951; George Formby (William Hoy Booth), singer and comedian, 1961; Zoltan Kodaly, composer, 1967; Buck (Sydney) Strickland, novelist, 1971; Donald Maclean, diplomat and Soviet agent, 1983; Sir Hugh Fraser, politician, 1983; Melina Mercouri (Amalia Maria Mercouri), politician and actress, 1994. On this day Verdi's *La Traviata* was first performed, Venice 1853; British soldiers were granted the right to wear spectacles on or off duty, 1902; the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon was destroyed by fire, 1926; frozen food was first put on sale by the Birdseye company, 1930; Ghana became independent, 1957. Today is the Feast Day of Saints Barbed and Billard, St. Cadroe, St. Chrodegang of Metz, St. Colette, Saints Cyburga, Cynwilde and Tibba, St. Cyril of Constantinople, St. Fridolin, St. Olegarius or Odegar and Saints Perpetua and Felicity.

Lectures

Victoria and Albert Museum: Clare Ford-Wille, "Donatello and the early 15th century", 2.30pm. **National Portrait Gallery:** Margaret Blinn, "Dr Richard Meade (1673-1754): physician to royalty, art collector and connoisseur", 1.10pm. **London School of Economics:** (Lakatos Award Lecture): Professor Abner Shimony, "Are Fundamental Natural Laws the Product of Cosmic Evolution?", 5.30pm.

Closed visits for high-risk prisoners lawful

LAW REPORT

6 March 1997

Regina v Secretary of State for the Home Department, ex parte O'Duibhir; Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Kennedy, Lord Justice Peter Gibson, Mr Justice Buckley) 27 February 1997

The imposition of stringent restrictions on visits to high escape-risk prisoners held in special secure units, with a view to eliminating the risk of weapons and other items which might assist an escape being smuggled in, was lawful.

The Court of Appeal dismissed an appeal against the decision of the Queen's Bench Divisional Court (Law Report, 24 October 1995) refusing applications by Liam O'Duibhir and Michael O'Brien for judicial review of a decision of the Home Secretary, in June 1995, to impose a "closed conditions" regime on visits to all those category A prisoners classed as "exceptional escape risk".

The decision to impose the new regime had been introduced on the recommendation of reports commissioned in the wake of an escape by six exceptional escape-risk category A prisoners (including the applicant O'Duibhir) from the special secure unit at

Whitemoor Prison in September 1994. The escapees had in their possession a variety of equipment including a rope ladder and two pistols and ammunition. It was concluded that such items must have been smuggled into prison by visitors. Under the new regime, visits passed through a metal detector, had their possessions X-rayed and were subjected to a rub-down search. There were cameras in the rooms where visits took place. Prisoners were strip-searched before and after visits. A fixed glass screen was placed between prisoners and their visitors.

Legal representatives visiting prisoners to take instruction or give advice were allowed to pass papers to prisoners on the other side of the glass screen without them being read by prison staff and to talk to them by telephone. For family visits, the closed visits regime was to be the norm but in exceptional circumstances open visits would be permitted.

Edward Fitzgerald QC and Tim Owen (B.M. Birnberg & Co) for the appli-

cants; Kenneth Parker QC and Pushpinder Saini (Treasury Solicitor) for the Home Secretary.

Lord Justice Kennedy said the applicants contended that the policy was unlawful because although section 47(1) of the Prison Act 1952 entitled the Home Secretary to make rules for the regulation and management of prisons and for the classification, treatment, discipline and control of persons detained therein, that did not entitle him to interfere with the lawyer-client relationship by more than the minimum amount necessary in the interests of prison security.

But his Lordship did not accept that closed visits impeded the free flow of communications between a solicitor and his client. The glass screen at worst did no more than make communication more difficult.

In *R v Home Secretary, ex p Leech* [1994] QB 198, Steyn LJ proposed the test of "whether there is a self-evident and pressing need" for the restriction imposed (in that case the

reading and censoring of letters between prisoners and their lawyers under rule 33(3) of the Prison Rules 1964, which was held to be ultra vires).

In the present case the "self-evident and pressing need" test had no real role to play, because rule 33(1) of the 1964 Rules, under which the Secretary of State might "with a view to securing discipline and good order or the prevention of crime" impose "restrictions . . . upon the communications to be permitted between a prisoner and other persons", was obviously *intra vires* section 47(1). Once that was recognised, all that remained was to decide whether the instruction to governors, imposing the closed visits regime, was unreasonable.

It was obvious that the situation had been carefully addressed. In the light of the security problems, it could not be said that in June 1995 or at any time since those entrusted with the unenviable task of deciding whether to implement in relation to exceptional escape risk category A prisoners the closed visits policy were not entitled to decide as they did.

Paul Magrath, Barrister

هكذا من الاجل

At last, the nation is offered a great promise

When in a season of political discord two parties come together in open agreement, it does not guarantee that they will talk sense, but it is a good omen. When they field, in Robert Macdonald and Robin Cook, two sensible and decent men, optimism grows. And the joint Labour and Liberal Democrat proposals for constitutional betterment did not disappoint.

A special merit was their modesty, and the fact that they still depend – in the case of plans for devolution and proportional representation – on popular approval through referenda. At last, it seems, the movement is under way to reform a constitution hardly less Venetian than when Tory Disraeli coined that phrase – disparagingly – a century and a half ago. We now have a prospect that within four or five years, perhaps even at the election after next, voters will see a fairer representation of their choices than first-past-the-post offers. To many that reform would be the most far-reaching the next government could effect.

The report of the Lib-Lab consultative committee is far from perfect. It has several sore thumbs. One is reform of the Lords. The document funks what it is that a second chamber is intended to do. How far should an upper chamber explicitly be given a role of blocking, checking and where necessary kicking-for-touch? Only when we know what an upper house is for can we assess proposals for its composition – not that there

are any in the Lib-Lab report. The hereditary peers disappear (except for those favoured few who are to be reincarnated as life peers) but how, and on what grounds, will they be replaced?

Perhaps there is method in ignoring the detail of Lords reform. This document embodies a huge commitment of Parliamentary time and political energy. A strong sense of priority among these reforms is vital, and not only to get them through the House of Commons. Any new government, whatever the size of its majority, has only a limited amount of political credit, which should be spent first on the big-picture changes. Giving the British people the option of radically changing the voting system must, in terms of its impact on our politics, be at or near the top of that list. There will never be final pre-referendum agreement on a single method of voting; the Reform Commission will have to struggle with details of Irish-style, German-style and other systems which are none of them perfect. But in the end it will give us a straight choice between a single more proportional system and the status quo. Reform may or may not happen; but that single agreement is a huge leap towards it.

Apart from full discussion of the Lords, the other yawning gap in the report concerns local government, and is all the more surprising given the long-term enthusiasm of the Liberal Democrats for genuine power-sharing, and

indeed that party's current strength in the town and county halls. Is this dour realism on Labour's part? Is it embarrassment? Gordon Brown's proposals for budgetary control are deeply centralising and allow no room for local financial discretion, though even without new money there is much that local authorities could do freed of central constraint. But perhaps Labour is not prepared to see its little local embarrassments – its Doncasters and Liverpools – cut loose and allowed real freedom. Still, it would be churlish to identify only the gaps without celebrating the commitments – for example, to the

incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights, and to a domestic apparatus helping citizens make use of its provisions. Recent discussion of privatisation as a way of securing improvements in London's Underground has once more focused attention on the dearth of city-wide democracy in the nation's capital. The report suggests the simple expedient of asking people whether they want an elected authority. It will be trickier than that. There is no easy way of identifying who the Londoners are who need to be invited to vote. Do they, for example, include the inhabitants of Carshalton

and Uxbridge who, historically, have been most reluctant to be included?

But to pose that kind of question is to state the obvious: no reform is clean-lined and simple. To seek to enact even half the packet of those displayed in this report would be to face down a mountain of opposition – Parliamentary opposition that will be furious, if not wholly cogent. To listen to Prime Minister Major is to be transported back to 1832 – since the country is so well governed, there is no possible justification for abolishing the constituency of Old Sarum. To listen to the more sophisticated Tory opponents of constitutional change is hardly more enlightening – according to David Willetts all manner of changes in our economic lives are natural and inevitable ... except modernisation of the way we are governed, which is somehow unnatural and to be resisted to the last ditch. The Tory position is, sad to report, little more than a defence of vested Tory interest. Under Conservative rule the Constitution has been allowed to become unbalanced, disordered and, on occasion, a threat to liberty.

It may be that if the Tories lose the election some people (including some Labour front-benchers?) might lose their enthusiasm for constitutional reform. Why do we need radical change when the system allows alternation in power? But there's the real significance and challenge of yesterday's report. It is more than a here-today, gone-tomorrow

manifesto commitment. Labour is promising something to Liberal Democrat voters and vice versa. They offer themselves to the voters as politicians groping beyond narrow party interest, experimenting with a more generous and plural way of holding power. It is a great promise, which deserves to awaken a prickle of interest in a sceptical nation.

The Swiss break the mould

For a country as internally diverse as Switzerland – four official languages, a cacophony of cantons – and one so open to trade and tourism, it is odd how deeply an unflattering national stereotype has lodged abroad. The Swiss are widely perceived as secretive and selfish, boring and smug. Now a more serious charge is added: wilful historical myopia over the Holocaust. In such a context yesterday's move to create a generously large victims' fund was not only welcome in itself but also subversive of the stereotype. The Swiss action follows intense international interest in Nazi bank accounts and anticipates the findings of both domestic and American historical commissions. It is none the less a grand gesture, to the credit of the Swiss government and people.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Covert police tactics beyond legal control

Sir: Facial recognition systems ("The face of crime captured digitally", 3 March) are only one facet of the new generation of "intelligence-led" policing methods. There are other methods, such as the increased reliance on informers, the use of bugging devices and the exchange of intelligence information generally, nationally and internationally. These methods are largely uncontrolled by law. They are being operated either in accordance with guidelines (video surveillance and informers), or under inadequate legislation not designed for the purpose (facial recognition systems and data protection law).

Even the present Police Bill does not cover all listening devices: only those which "interfere with property" or fall within the definition of "wireless telegraphy". There are present and future generations of bugging techniques – for example, those using infrared light or laser technology – which fall completely outside its provisions. Intelligence-led methods are covert and intrusive. The Data Protection Act offers protection to individuals in some circumstances, but was not drafted with present-day surveillance techniques in mind. In the absence of a general right to privacy in this country, it is essential that there be specific statutory protection to ensure that such police operations are both fair and accountable, particularly if the evidence gained is to be admissible in any subsequent criminal trial.

MADELINE COLVIN
Legal Officer
JUSTICE
London EC4

Sir: Michael Howard wants to restrict the right of the accused to opt for jury trial in many cases of medium severity ("Howard under fire over plans to curb jury trials", 28 February).

His principal reason, I gather, is that large numbers of these cases result in last-minute "guilty" pleas, often as a consequence of plea-bargaining in the moments before the case is due to be heard. Much excessive crown court time is wasted and the progress of other cases delayed.

The situation is no different in magistrates' courts. A surprising number of trials dissolve at the last minute for precisely the same reasons. The costs will be considerably less, but unlike the crown court, where there will probably be other cases ready to be heard, the day or half-day set aside in magistrates' courts is often lost.

Should not the Home Secretary be looking at a ban on the Crown Prosecution Service agreeing to less serious charges, in response to the offer of "guilty" pleas, during the seven days before the trial date?

The only reason for the last-minute nature of most changes of plea is that lawyers on both sides have not contacted each other before. Human nature will see to it that things are left to the last minute – but if the last minute were to be seven days before the trial a lot of time and money would be saved.

RICHARD WELCH
Nantwich, Chyrd

Sir: When a burglar broke into our house, he was soon disturbed by my daughter, who arrived just after him. They saw each other just before he climbed back out of the kitchen window. Total damage



about £80 and a frightened and still nervous young woman. She later identified him from photographs at the police station and picked him out of an identity parade.

Not only did he claim his right to trial by jury, but he also got it postponed because one of his witnesses was ill. The eventual trial started one day and finished the next; there was a unanimous verdict of guilty and, although this was not his first offence, a sentence of 10 hours of community service – after three visits to court by barristers, solicitors, police and witnesses.

The magistrates would have cost us far less and might have produced a more appropriate sentence.

GW STANNERS
Redditch, Worcestershire

Sir: In your leading article on Jack Straw's proposals to tackle juvenile offending (4 March), you say that the facts of youth crime justify Mr Straw's "song and dance" about the issue. The trouble is that the facts are extremely difficult to interpret.

The Criminal Statistics, for example, show a marked decline in the number of 10- to 13-year-olds convicted or cautioned in the years since 1985. The numbers of 14- to 17-year-olds convicted or cautioned has remained more or less constant over that period.

It is said that the greater use of informal action by the police may explain these trends. But as they stand, the statistics do not warrant the feverish language about young people and crime to which politicians of both main parties now seem to be addicted.

STEPHEN SHAW
Director
Prison Reform Trust
London EC1

Europe fails to give green lead

Sir: The European Union has not shown the leadership on attacking man-made climate change which your article ("EU to cut global warming gases by tenth", 4 March) suggests. The EU has not pledged to cut emissions by 10 per cent or by any other figure. It has simply agreed a "negotiating position" for the continuing talks on who should cut emissions of which gases by when, in the hope that other developed nations will accept a challenging target. If consensus can be reached, the EU as a whole will reduce total emissions of three key greenhouse gases (CO₂, CH₄ and N₂O) by 15 per cent by 2010.

While this proposal is important, and may breathe life into the currently deadlocked climate change negotiations, it is flawed. Critically missing from the EU's negotiating position is the essential 2005 interim target year, which is necessary to ensure that industrialised nations take early action to limit greenhouse gas emissions, rather than leaving it all until the last minute in 13 years' time.

The original proposal from the Dutch government (currently holding the EU presidency) proposed cuts in CO₂ emissions of 8 per cent by 2005, and 12 per cent by 2010. These sub-targets were eliminated in the EU statement, allegedly at the insistence of the UK's John Gummer.

The EU will now be unable to

table a 2005 target, as the next EU Environmental Council meeting is after 3 June. This is the deadline for a protocol proposal to be formally tabled for the Kyoto Climate Summit in December. Given that neither the US nor Japan currently accepts the need for any reductions in greenhouse gas emissions before 2010, and with only 23 negotiating days left, the world is on course to fail to agree the urgent action necessary to prevent dangerous climate change.

DR PATRICK GREEN
Friends of the Earth International
International Climate Negotiations
Bonn
Germany

Futile fraud in Albanian poll

Sir: Last May I was privileged to be one of the two UK observers sent to monitor the Albanian parliamentary elections as part of the team from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Once we had witnessed the extent of vote-rigging and intimidation, a number of observers made the unprecedented move of announcing their dissent and then the elections were fundamentally flawed. I was asked to be their spokesman.

The events of the past few weeks have their origins in that rigged poll. It was so blatant, so naïve, and so widespread, that few Albanians could have any further respect for

their "elected" parliamentarians, or the security forces who openly supported the ruling Democratic Party. No wonder then, that when the ill-conceived pyramid schemes collapsed, the people should vent their anger against the government.

The irony is that perhaps Sali Berisha was the best man to modernise his pitifully poor country. Many believe he would have won the elections last May without resorting to vote-rigging. Instead he, and his party, could not resist the temptation. He has now no legitimate right to stay, other than to form a coalition government with the opposition parties, dissolve parliament, and ensure that ensuing elections are free and fair.

PAUL KEETCH
Parliamentary Spokesman
Hereford Liberal Democrats
Hereford

What Christians owe to Jews

Sir: Andrew Brown's article (Faith & Reason, 1 March), attacking Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks's endorsement of the "Judeo-Christian tradition", deserves to be challenged.

There are of course many differences between the two major faiths, but plenty of common elements, and essences of Hebrew religion are found in the New Testament – not least in the teachings of Jesus, and the Lord's

Supper, which is based on the Passover celebrations.

The Exodus traditions of deliverance from oppression are fundamental to Judaism, early Christianity, and now liberation theology, which a lot of people (including the Vatican) don't much like because of the challenge to the status quo.

The Exodus stories were also fundamental to the English Civil War and the American Revolution – Christians who saw themselves as a New Israel. They also echo in the words of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, a leading American Jew, when he noted that the Baptist minister

Martin Luther King Jr is a sign that God has not forsaken the United States of America. God has sent him to us. His presence is the hope of America. His mission is sacred, his leadership of supreme importance to every one of us ... I call upon every Jew to harken to his voice, to share his vision, to follow in his way. The whole future of America will depend upon the impact and the influence of Dr King.

That is the Judeo-Christian tradition at its best.

The Rev CHARLES BROCK
Mansfield College
Oxford

Boiling point

Sir: Will all the water consumers who have to boil their water because of the cryptosporidium organism (report, 4 March) be compensated? The water companies are legally obliged to supply drinkable water, and it costs money to keep boiling water.

C WELLS
Rutlip
Middlesex

Honesty about growing up

Sir: No wonder so many young girls are suffering from anorexia and bulimia these days ("Why won't you tell me about tampons, Mummy?", 3 March). These girls are afraid to grow up, and have found a shocking way of holding on to their childhood.

Their mothers, meanwhile, are accomplices in this plot, terrified of taking responsibility for adult behaviour and the realities facing them in this world. Thus they present to their daughters an image of the adult world that is frightening and confusing.

My own mother told me, when I was around the age of eight, that I would begin to develop breasts, grow hair in several areas of my body, and begin to menstruate. She then bought me both tampons and sanitary towels and showed me what I would have to do, should menstruating begin unexpectedly at school or some other social gathering; and she always knew when I had my period.

Both she and my father never failed to compliment me on what a lovely young lady I was growing into. They gave me confidence and realistic expectations of what adulthood was all about. I did much the same with my own daughter, never exaggerating the discomfort of period pain and never telling her horror stories of childbirth.

I also have a son, with whom I discussed the "facts of life" as and when he asked, so that by the time he was shaving, it was all a natural process of growing up and joining the adult world. And incidentally, why is it that we turn menstruation into such a "problem" area? Men tell me shaving, which in most cases must be done daily, is a huge bore, but they just get on with it.

Mrs ARIELLA LISTER
Hatch End, Middlesex

What a bargain!

Sir: I am much obliged to Gerald Dorey of Oxford (letter, 4 March) for being willing to buy my car for £1,500 on the understanding that, if I give him the £1,500 back, he will provide my family and me with the use of a good-quality car – in perpetuity. Would he kindly stop sheltering behind the relative anonymity of the letters page and publish his address, so that I can take him up on his kind offer?

(Perhaps he has not noticed that the transaction would make sense to him only if the car were worth a great deal more than £1,500. But if that's the case, I might be better advised to keep it.)

The Rev JEREMY CRADDOCK
Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire

Aretha's no softie

Sir: Your report on motorists' top 10 favourite tunes ("Drivers at ease with middle-of-the-road melodies", 3 March) fails to mention on the No 10 entry – Aretha Franklin's "Respect".

Far from being "easy-listening music", Ms Franklin's transformation of the Otis Redding number into an anthem of feminine self-assertion is far more of a "cutting-edge melody", despite its age, than anything Oasis or their counterparts have produced.

Could it be that female drivers favour "Respect" because that's exactly what they want (and so seldom get) from the sizeable number of male drivers who regard their car as a virility symbol? STEVE PILKINGTON
Stokeport, Cheshire

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number.
Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk.

E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

analysis

Fur coats come in from the cold

The popular image is of pretty animals kept in misery until a brutal death. But, says Richard North, the reality is tidy farms, serious investment and the best example of factory farming

Mike Cobbleddick owns a very fast-growing business. The 6,000 female mink he has on his farm in Devon will be mated this month and by summer will have an average of five small minks – "kits" – each. Many of them are the quite rare Blue Iris, which fetched about \$50 each at auction last month. Around 40 of them are needed to make a coat for the "dumb animals" of the anti-fur ads. Mr Cobbleddick last year bought a mink farm in Denmark to double his production, and next winter's harvest of kits should, with luck, gross him about £2m.

"I'm proud to be a mink farmer," says Mr Cobbleddick among the rows of sheds on his English farm, built up over 30 years of riding a notoriously fickle market. "But here, I can't blow my own trumpet". Worse than that, in England he knows he's a pariah. His family and the 10 people he employs face picketing and worse from animal rights protesters.

Wherever it is, mink production involves pretty little animals who live in small cages and are gassed to death aged about seven months. From such farms, 85 per cent of the world's mink is produced, about 45 per cent of it on Denmark's 2,600 mink farms and very little on Britain's nine. It is paraded on the fashion show catwalks of Milan and Frankfurt. With such images to pre-



Mike Cobbleddick: 'I'm proud to be a mink farmer'

sent to the public imagination, it is hardly surprising that Peta (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, an American animal rights group) were able to persuade some of the world's leading models to protest against fur farming (though their doing so has not stopped several of them modelling its product since).

Behind the evocative images, there lies a more humdrum reality. Mike Cobbleddick's farms are neat and tidy. They bear witness to serious investment, and not merely in the hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of equipment used to produce feed, or for the annual process of treating the skins. The farms don't smell any more than chicken or pig farms

are inclined to, despite the mink's main diet being waste from the fish industry (only about 10 or at most 20 per cent is grain which might be used for human food). Mr Cobbleddick's carcasses used to go for rendering and cattle feed, until the BSE scare. Now they go to landfill, but there are hopes that they will soon be part of the waste which fuels a biogas plant producing gas.

Walking between the rows of cages, it is not obvious what the fuss is about. The mink are lively but not frantic, inquisitive but not nervously eager. As one would expect in creatures whose skins will be so closely inspected, they appear to be in prime physical condition.

But few people ever get to see these mostly reassuring scenes, or would necessarily trust a cursory view of them anyway. Instead, they might get in touch with the Government's statutory independent advisers for an informed view. Unfortunately for the fur trade, the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) – which includes vets and welfare campaigners – in 1989 reported on fur farming systems and said they "do not satisfy some of the most basic criteria ... for protecting the welfare of farm animals". FAWC's chairman then and now, Professor Colin Speeding, says the council felt "it would be very difficult to get it right". Mink (and fox, which we'll come to) were still wild

after "only" 50-60 generations of breeding in captivity. FAWC asked for further research to be undertaken by the trade before it would come to a conclusion as to what standards might be thought satisfactory. FAWC's existing position is sufficient to reinforce Labour's insistence that it would allow no new fur farms to be licensed, as evidence of its general policy that fur farming should cease.

But this gloomy position looks less tenable in the light of work by Georgia Mason, an ethologist at Oxford University, let alone a deal of Continental work. Following studies on a British mink farm, Dr Mason says: "As far as factory farming goes, the mink are probably the best example there is and the least cause for concern." True, on at least one farm Dr Mason has seen very prevalent behavioural problems, but she says: "I think they can be reduced but not totally abolished by proper husbandry". On five farms I saw none of the behaviour she pointed to.

Seen from a Danish perspective, mainstream British prejudices seem rather odd. Danes buy more free-range eggs than the British, and are growing more fussy than most Britons about the way their milk and pork are produced. But most Danes seem wholly

unfazed about mink farming. From the windows of Birger Christensen, perhaps Copenhagen's leading manufacturer and retailer of furs, Pia Rasmussen looks out on the world's first pedestrian street and sees women of every age and income wearing fur. She says: "We have hardly any protest at all. Oh, perhaps a little some years ago. But nothing since."

The scenes of apparent contentment in Mr Cobbleddick's Danish farm match those of his

mother and young do well if left together, and that young siblings also thrive in small groups. As to the notorious gassing, Professor Elnif points out that most farm animals suffer their worst stress being carted to slaughter, but that mink die in a cart wheeled to their cage. He adds: "Video evidence says that when the animal comes in, it can't smell the gas. Within 20 seconds they lose consciousness and are clinically dead in two to five minutes. Moreover, as you take an animal out of its cage it might scream but that doesn't disturb the others."

Mink are kept in wire cages, and that includes the flooring. But – and the same is true of battery hens – there is no evidence that they would prefer a solid floor. Professor Elnif says: "Copenhagen University have taken wire and solid bases and allowed the mink to decide which to spend time on – but they spend equal time on either." However, solid floors become filthy and unhygienic very quickly. FAWC had suggested that mink, being semi-aquatic, might like to have swimming facilities in their

As far as factory farming goes, mink are the least cause for concern

cages. Professor Elnif is doubtful: "It doesn't swim like an otter. It can't see more than 30 centimetres in the water. It sits and watches for prey from the shore and then dives in for perhaps 10 seconds." The Danes suggest that the barrenness of a mink's cage bothers us but not the animal. Dr Mason is less sure: she and a colleague, Jonathan Cooper, are researching mink's preferences, and find the animals quite keen on swimming. "But that's not to say they would miss not doing it," she says. "It may simply be a case of out of sight, out of mind. We'll have to try to find out."

Denmark's leading authority on mink farming, Knud Erik Heller, associate professor at the Zoological Institute at the University of Copenhagen, says we can certainly tell whether mink are feeling stress, and what's more have a good idea whether they experience "good" or "bad" stress. Broadly speaking, short periods of mild stress are rather good for an animal, but sustained stress can be very bad. "These animals feel a good deal of stress around the times of mating and weaning", he says. But they can be assumed to like the first and not the second, rather like humans, and rather as they would in the wild. Professor

Heller stresses that much of what kindly people might assume must be good for animals may actually merely be good for the people wishing it so. "I honestly can't find anything to improve the condition of mink on farms".

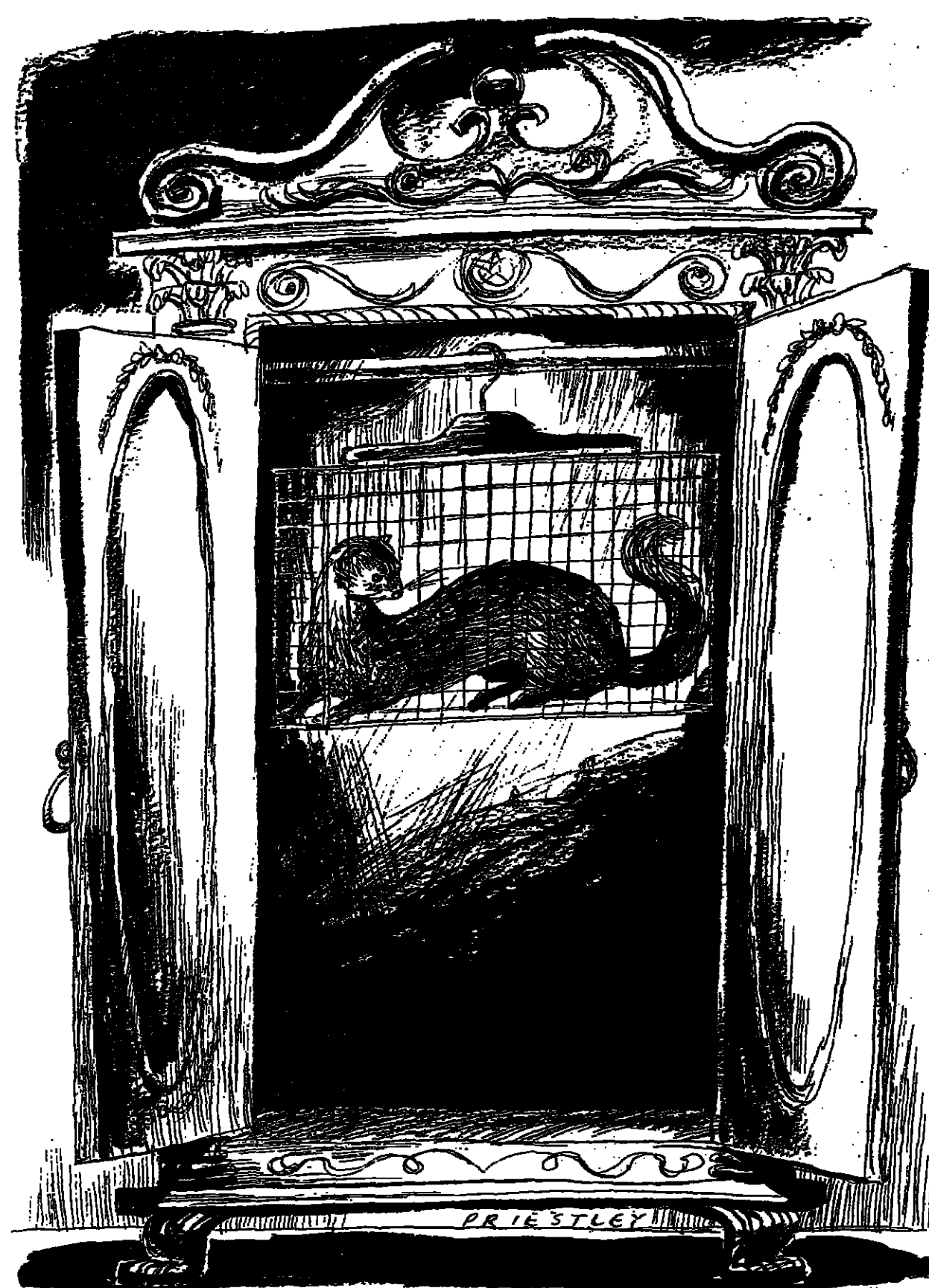
There are no fox farms in Britain and very few in Denmark. Their management is controversial, and some mink farmers say they wouldn't undertake it. The Danish Animal Welfare Society's vet, Enid Weber, says she has little complaint about mink farming but does not approve of farming foxes. To the untrained, and possibly anthropomorphising, eye there is something doggy and baleful about the way a caged fox returns one's stare. They can seem nervous. However, things are improving, especially with the provision of a shelf which the fox can use as a retreat. Birthe Broberg, the senior veterinary officer at the Danish Ministry of Agriculture, says: "My experience is that before legislation was brought in you would see very barren cages and I felt that they weren't acceptable. But with the changes I thought I could see a difference in the fox. You didn't see the special behaviour of pacing and rolling around."

There is solid evidence that foxes respond well to being given a nest, and that handling when young helps them with human contact later. There is good evidence that foxes can be tamed, and thus perhaps made into surprisingly good candidates for factory farming.

The difference in view between British and Danish feeling is soon to be tested. A standing committee of the Council of Europe is due to meet at the end of April to discuss an updated set of standards for the farming of fur-bearing animals. It is composed of vets from various agriculture ministries, with welfareists – mostly British – as observers. An early draft enshrines the current industry best practice for mink, and includes new provisions for nests and handling for foxes.

The accord will probably face opposition from countries with little or no fur farming, such as France, which operates with what we might as well call "bystander virtue". The British are sympathetic to the anti-farming cause, but determined to try to broker as much improvement as possible. Should Labour win the forthcoming election, it is anyone's guess whether they would allow an agriculture minister to sign up to the convention in October, as currently planned.

Any agreement will probably not much dent the prejudice of many people that fur-farming, like fur-wearing, is too much of a luxury to deserve a decent hearing. None the less, it looks as though buying a mink coat is already, and buying a fox coat could soon be, about as morally challenging as tucking into a bacon sandwich. Even now, both are probably already less immoral than paying so little for an egg that it must be produced in a battery cage.



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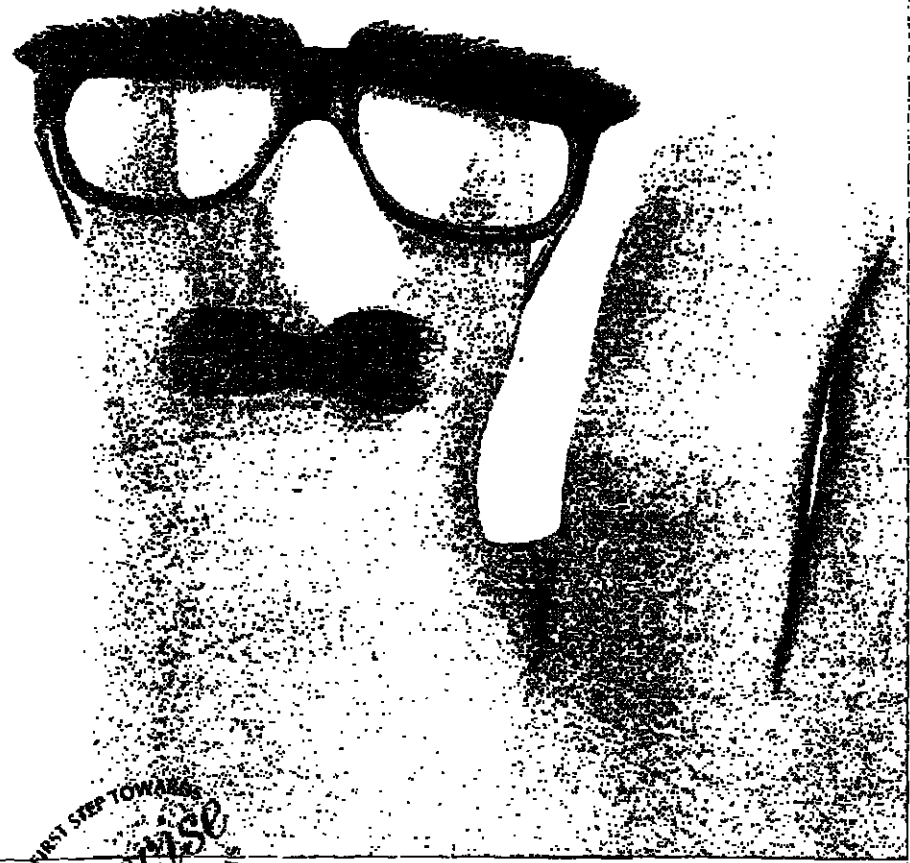
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There's no disguising problem toenails



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FREEPHONE 0800 200 210

The same joke, and it has lasted well

I was leafing through a brief biography of William Hogarth the other day, in case the subject should come up in conversation in this his tercentenary year, and I should have to display some rudimentary knowledge of the man, and one thing in it brought me up short. It was an entry describing young Hogarth's sixth year. "1703. Family moves to St John's Gate, where Richard Hogarth (father) opens a Latin-speaking coffee house."

The coffee house apparently did not prosper, as four years later poor Hogarth was in prison for debt, but I am not sure whether it was because the coffee was no good or because the obligation to talk in Latin was too daunting. It seems extraordinary to us today, when ancient Latin and Greek are not normally heard outside the classroom and not much inside, that there was a time when Latin was spoken as a colloquial tongue long after the last Roman had vanished, but it is not so long ago that Latin was considered necessary to a gentleman.

And it has not entirely vanished. There was a Radio 4 programme presented by Jeremy Nicholas not so long ago, which looked at Latin today and discovered at least one person who still talks Latin on a daily basis as part of his work. He was a jovial American working at the Vatican whose job it was to communicate with Catholic dioceses all round the world, and who often found that his only common language with a Latvian or Paraguayan cardinal was Latin. He did not speak Latvian or Spanish, and the man at the other end of the line did not speak English. Ergo, he used Latin as his lingua franca.

Well, you don't have to be very smart to realise that I managed to get three Latin words into that last sentence without anyone's eyebrows going up. Latin is still very much all around us. It may be a dead language, but its bones come to the surface every time we dig a bit. For instance, there was a good Latin joke in the Jeremy Nicholas programme which I think most people would still understand, and I will test



Miles Kingston

that theory by bringing you the joke now.

Here is the joke. Apparently there was a school which had to change its motto from Latin to English. The motto in English was "I hear, I see, I learn". Fair enough. Unfortunately, in Latin the motto came out as "Audio, Video, Disco".

Danish chuckles. End of joke. Of course there are Latin phrases which we use every day without thinking it strange, such as "status quo", or "anno domini", or "de

facto". But there are other expressions, often abbreviations, which we use daily without perhaps realising that they have a Latin origin. Eg "eg" (*exempli gratia*), "ie" (*id est*), "viz" (*videlicet*). Other languages tend not to do this. The German for "viz" is not "viz" but "d.h.", or "das Heiss". The German for "eg" is not "eg" but "z.B." or "zum Beispiel". I don't think German or French even have an abbreviation, Latin or native, for "ie", but we love our Latin abbreviations, even if we couldn't tell you what the original means.

This is especially true of the language of footnotes, which is full of expressions like "op cit" and "qv" and "cf" and "passim" and "sic". I had always wondered why the abbreviation for "compare" was "cf" until just now I did what I should have done 30 years ago and looked it up in the dictionary. It is short for "confer" which is presumably the Latin for "compare". But the one I have always been wariest of is "ibid", short for "ibidem", meaning

"in the same place", and this is because I once was present at a most embarrassing moment whose memory I treasure even now. I used to share weekly French tutorials at university with a fellow undergraduate called Martin, and one week we had both prepared essays on the great but not very interesting French poet, Alfred de Vigny. It was Martin's turn to read out his essay. The tutor and I sat there half-asleep until Martin, talking about some poetic trick of de Vigny's, said:

"This particular poetic device is used a lot in *Ibid*, sir."

At this the tutor jolted awake. "Ibid, eh? And what pray is *Ibid*?" said the tutor. "Oh, it's the title of a long poem by Alfred de Vigny," said Martin, obviously surprised that the tutor was ignorant of it. "It's very good. They're always quoting from it."

The tutor glanced across at me to make sure that he wasn't hearing things. I raised an eyebrow. We both exchanged a silent but very enjoyable guffaw. "Carry on," said the tutor.

A glimpse at the dark heart of Toryism

Oops! The veil slipped a little yesterday and we glimpsed the underbelly of Tory Man - David Evans, motor-mouth MP for Luton, naked as nature intended. In an unguarded interview to sixth-formers, he talked of black bastards and his Labour opponent's bastard children. He said absurdly that the Birmingham Six had killed hundreds, and that Virginia Bottomley, dead from the neck up, only got her job because she's a woman.

No, no, that's only "dear lovable David" or "that perfectly horrible little squirt" at it again, said assorted Tory voices hastening to explain away his "incoherence". Come, come, every party has its buffoons, all part of the rich warp and weft of Westminster life - where's your sense of proportion? Where's your sense of humour? These mainstream Tory voices imply that I am a typical boring blue-stocking humourless Independent type - "You Islington chablis socialists," said one, "you are far too sensitive about politically incorrect language." Of course they deplore every word that Evans said - disgusting, disgraceful, but, well, that's Evans for you: "Salt of the earth" - has his finger on the working-class pulse. They love him.

Imagine if some Ken Livingstone had said anything a fraction as "off message". Think of the outcry at some mild heresy such as putting a penny on the income tax to pay for the NHS - Mawhinney would have it up there on posters faster than you could say loony left. A cry would go up that the militants are creeping out from under the Blair bed. As for Labour, they'd have had anyone a quarter as outrageous as Evans out on his ear by yesterday: the Tories will do nothing about their Militant Tendency.

No, it's just silly old David. But is it? In the lobbies and the corridors, the bars, clubs and conferences, and all the places in which Tories meet you hear the words, the phrases and above all the ideas that those words reveal. Wogs and bimbos, tarts and nig-nogs, chinkies, bits of skirt and bits of fluff (they are old, remember - average age of Tory members is 64). We all know... that Caribbeans are lazy dogheads and everyone on benefits is a scrounger. We all know... that teenage girls get all grow up delinquent and fatherless girls get pregnant on purpose to get flats. We all know... all asylum-seekers are frauds and all young blacks are muggers.

Now none of us talks in private the way we speak and write for public consumption. Jokes, shorthand, slang, there are a hundred things we say to our friends that they parse differently for strangers. But not those words, nor those ideas. Interestingly, every Tory I telephoned yesterday, even on the liberal wing, used the phrase "politically correct" at some point in the conversation, as in "We don't want to be too politically correct, do we?" or "I know he's awfully politically incorrect but..." - and there



Polly Toynbee
Commentator
of the Year

David Evans
embarrasses
other Tories
like the
breaking of
wind in a
public place

you have it. The right-wing press, right-wingers of all kinds bandy about the "politically correct" epithet because it has become a pormanteau cover-up for the unspeakable. Those who mock non-racist or non-sexist language as "politically correct" actually mean, but dare not say, that racism and sexism is OK with them. They pretend that it is the language of equality that they detest - but actually it is the idea of equality they deplore.

So have we glimpsed into the dark heart of Conservatism - or is it just "maverick", "one off", "our man on the terraces" Evans? Take immigration, for instance. By chance yesterday in the Commons Nicholas Budgen urged the Prime Minister to attack two liberalisations of immigration law promised by Labour - but John Major snubbed him, determined not to play the race card (his last remaining linchpin of genuine decency - though after him, what vileness comes next?). When I talked to Budgen, he was angry: "Strict control of immigration is important - but it only comes on page 480 of our election guide. Go and ask my people in Wolverhampton what they think. It was very silly of the Prime Minister to give in to the politically correct lobby."

John Carlisle MP never knowingly outstepped on the right, praised Evans yesterday: "More of that kind of talk would get us back to the working-class vote. Let's call a spade a spade. When Margaret Thatcher spoke of immigrants swamping us, she struck a chord. You should have heard my taxi driver talking about the Huns and being pushed around by a load of foreigners. Ask the chap in the public bar and he'll tell you about asylum-seekers..." and lots more on those lines.

On the other wing, Edwina Currie (whose chances of re-election are vanishing by the day) was in free-talking mood yesterday, scathing about the wrong tone her party strikes: out of touch, out of date, with no notion of human rights, race, gender, equality or gay issues. "MPs think social issues don't count. Their tone and attitude is 1947, not 1997. They think women are all wives and mothers, and the only ones they tolerate in the Commons are unthreateningly stupid, like Dame Jill Knight and Lady Olga Maitland. They don't understand the world has changed, and they cause offence whenever they talk about single mothers, marriage or divorce. The Tory party has driven the voters away."

Yes, there are decent Tories who will not talk race: black bastard talk is vulgar and loutish. But you don't have to scratch them to find that they are all indeed conservatives, and conservatives are not liberals. David Evans embarrasses them like the breaking of wind in a public place, because it is what so many of them do themselves in private. And if the more tedious of them do not, then they tolerate talk and jokes like that in virtually every dwindling Conservative club full of old, sour, mean, white faces up and down the land.

The Bishop of Birmingham seems a remarkable fellow. He appears fantastically unbothered by the seething hatreds and accusations of racism that have been flying around his King's Norton parish for the past couple of years, since the Rev Eve Pitts was taken on as part of the ecclesiastical team.

The trouble was revealed when the Rev Pitts complained in church that, almost from the time of her appointment, she had been treated as "a doormat" by her senior colleague: she assumed the bishop would support her, but found only a typed letter of resignation waiting for her signature at the episcopal HQ.

When asked about the matter, the Bishop assured the press his turbulent vicar was a "talented pastor" and that, if she would resign quietly, she would get her full stipend and could keep her parish house. For a leading cleric to assume this would be any comfort to a person who had pursued her vocation through a thousand obstacles, to become the country's first black lady vicar, seems howlingly insensitive. Next day, the Bishop announced his engagement to Ms Sabine Bird, with the words "We are both surprised and delighted by this turn of events", as if it were happening to somebody else. How detached from reality must you be, to be surprised by your own actions?

But then Bishops of Birmingham have always been a little wayward. Philip Hoare, who has just finished writing a study of the celebrated "47,000 pervers" trial in 1918, points out that the Bishop of Birmingham at the time was one Russell Wakefield, an outstanding chap, pillar of the Established Church, who presided over the "Cinema Commission of Enquiry" in 1917, set up by the National Council of Public Morals to look into loose behaviour on screen.

Possibly fired by images of celluloid smut, the upstanding bishop set his crozier at Marie Stopes, the shockingly controversial women's rights campaigner and contraception impresario, who was on the commission representing the Society of Authors.

"The Bishop was so devoted to me, he implored me to marry him and said he would give up being a Bishop



Oration negation: Luciano Benetton, above, said he was glad to have started a debate. So did Noel Gallagher, below left, and so did Michael Bogdanov, below right



If I would only promise," Ms Stopes wrote to Oscar Wilde's paramour, Lord Alfred Douglas. "But of course he was far too old for me." What on earth do they put in the holy water in Brummie land?

Maybe the Bishop would have benefited from a little chat with the Almighty, and I don't mean prayer, or meditation or mystical communion. I mean a conversation. That is what an American writer called Neale Donald Walsch claims to have done: and the resulting colloquy, *Conversations with God*, is a best-seller.

Mr Walsch's "uncommon dialogue" with the Almighty began in 1992 when he was writing an irritable letter to Him (as you do) complaining about his lot in menapausal terms: "Why isn't my life working?" ... "What have I done to deserve a life of continuing struggle?" To his amazement, his pen began writing by itself and God, he claims, replied. Walsch says the answers from on high came fluently, as if he were taking dictation, and went on for three years.

What kind of conversationalist does God turn out to be? He alternates



snappy interchanges, like Socratic dialogues, with long tirades about creation, death, the soul and how to avoid being a Bad Person. He talks about "damage limitation" and "optimum advantage", says "no way" a lot and quotes from "your Shakespeare". He sprinkles his discourse with camp French italics ("n'est-ce pas?") and makes dull little jokes about hell - "Good grief!" cries Walsch after one sally, "you're a regular comedian." "It took you this long to find that out?" God enquires witheringly. "You looked at the world lately?"

God is surprisingly liberal about sex ("If I didn't want you to play certain games, I wouldn't have given you the toys") but as disabbling as a Chancellor on Budget Day when it comes to booze and fags ("If you've ever taken alcohol into your body, you have very little will to live"). Oh and the Creator of All Things explains that yeah, there is life on other planets, sure, they've visited the earth and yep, they're looking at us now - but (displaying, for a spiritual being, an unexpected degree of publishing savvy) He can't say any more because it's all going in a follow-up volume.

"This does not seem,"

The Bish offers a deal, and God speaks out on damage limitation, aliens and the demon drink

john walsh

Walsch comments, with masterly understatement, of this self-created pile of bollocks, "like what a communication with God would feel like". The Redeemer ripostes, in Woody Allen-sprache: "You want bells and whistles? I'll see what I can arrange."

Last year Michael Bogdanov attacked theatre critics, and now four of them are to direct plays at the Battersea Arts Centre in London, thus risking the scorn and critical abuse that are their own stock-in-trade. Speaking on the Today programme, Bogdanov said: "Of course I welcome this news. I'm glad to be able to initiate a debate into..." I can't remember what it was supposed to be into - something like "Creativity and Critical Responsibility", I expect. But I'd stopped listening by then, having cut myself with a razor out of sheer irritation.

And what was it Noel Gallagher said, when they asked him about the fuss he had caused with his pronouncement that taking ecstasy was like having a cup of tea in the morning? "I'm verry glad," he intoned, negotiating his way uncertainly through this syllabic minefield, "to have initiated a debate on the danger of drugs..." And lastly, if you can stand it, there is Luciano Benetton, the supersmooth *capo di capo* of the Italian clothing dynasty. When I interviewed him last year, and asked about one of his bad-taste advertisements (the bloodstained army jacket one? the copulating horses one? the HIV one?), he replied: "No we're not worried by the public's reaction. We are happy to have initiated a debate about Bosnia/ racism/ AIDS..."

Are you as tired as I am of all this debate-initiation? It is now the standard response from anybody whose unprompted response would have been "Yes I was a complete pillock to have done/said/published that, wasn't I?"

The Football Bung trial has been left hanging in mid-air, like a freeze-framed goalkeeper: but while it has gone on, a curious levity had prevailed. This is partly due to the judge, Mr Justice Tuckey, who punctuated the action with strange utterances: "OK let's break for lunch," he said one day to nobody in particular, "for in the vernacular of the Zimbabwean trial, let's grab a graze..." Summing up the evidence of Bruce Grobbelaar's former friend Chris Vincent, who contacted the tabloids about the goalie's alleged inquiries, he waggishly noted: "Mr Vincent has been called every name under the sun - although said one day to nobody in particular, 'for in the vernacular of the Zimbabwean trial, let's grab a graze...' 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business & city

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BAT hit for £160m to cover pollution claims

Tom Stevenson
City Editor

BAT stunned the City yesterday with an unexpected £160m provision against the future cost of long-running pollution claims, the extension of an olive branch to the anti-smoking lobby and a renewal of hopes that the tobacco to financial services group was planning a demerger of its two main businesses. The shares, a hostage to sentiment for much of the past year, tumbled another 18.5p to close at 531p yesterday.

In a dramatic climbdown from the adversarial rhetoric that has dogged recent tobacco-related litigation in the US, BAT said yesterday it would be prepared to strike a deal with lawyers representing former smokers if they came up with a "sensible proposal".

The move opens the way for a multi-billion-pound settlement that would have been inconceivable until an onslaught of litigation in the past year made the tobacco companies' hawkish position on compensation increasingly untenable.

Martin Broughton, chief executive, blamed the spiralling cost of fighting court cases and the impact of the escalating litigation on BAT's share price for the apparent capitulation. He said BAT's US tobacco subsidiary, Brown & Williamson, spent \$100m (£62m) on legal fees last year, up from \$60m in 1995, and he expected the figure to continue rising.

News of BAT's new-found willingness to accommodate its opponents came as it announced a sharp slowdown in profits growth last year, with the

group's Eagle Star to Allied Dunbar financial services arm hit by an unexpected £160m extra provision to cover the likely cost of old pollution cases. BAT capped the day's revelations with a hint that a demerger of its tobacco and financial services operations was firmly back on the agenda in the group's attempt to return to a growth track in shareholder value.

Mr Broughton said BAT had hired two firms of lawyers in the US to advise it on the process of getting congressional approval for any settlement. But

he insisted a deal would only be acceptable if it drew a line under all present and future litigation. He said the sort of numbers flying around the press - some reports have suggested plaintiffs are seeking a \$6bn-a-year payment from the industry - were wide of the mark, but he admitted that paying up to \$100m a year would leave shareholders better off.

BAT's shares closed lower as the market digested the unexpected pollution charge which reflected a change to the way Eagle Star assesses its likely

liability in respect of pollution cases stretching back to the 1960s. Mr Broughton admitted it was not possible to say whether there would be further provisions.

He declined to comment on whether BAT had held discussions with Commercial Union on a possible merger of its financial services arm with CU or whether the putative deal would have been the prelude to a break up of its two main businesses.

BAT has been under pressure for some time to split its tobacco

and insurance arms which have no apparent synergies.

Pre-tax profits in the year to December increased by 5 per cent to £2.50bn from £2.38bn in 1995, which compared with a 26 per cent rise in profits the previous year. Earnings per share rose to 48.6p (47.7p) but the well-covered dividend increased 8 per cent to 26p. A foreign income dividend increased the effective value of the payout by 3.5p.

Within the group result, tobacco made further progress after its strong performance in

1995, with profits rising 7 per cent in local currency terms to £1.63bn. Volumes increased by 4 per cent despite a continuing slowing of demand in the US and world market share increased to 12.8 per cent.

Financial services, which takes in the Farmers business in America, slipped 3 per cent to £1.02bn but stripping out the pollution provision, there was an underlying 16 per cent increase in life and investment profits and a £22m rise in general insurance profit to £586m.

Comment, page 19

Sterling bumps against ceiling as rates stay put

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

The pound bumped up repeatedly against its old lower limit in the exchange rate mechanism without breaking through in the 24 hours up until trading closed in London yesterday.

The currency's thwarted bid to pass the psychological barrier of DM12.78 came as all the signs were that Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer, had resisted Bank of England advice at yesterday's monetary meeting to raise interest rates.

"Sterling has been up against the ceiling several times in the past 24 hours without quite making it," said Simon Briscoe,

UK economist at investment bank Nikko.

Neil MacKinnon at Citibank predicted that it was only a matter of time. "It will have another bash at testing the DM12.78 level in the very short term and will probably go beyond it."

The health of the British economy compared with the rest of Europe and investors' expectation that a Labour government will raise the level of interest rates help explain the strength of the pound.

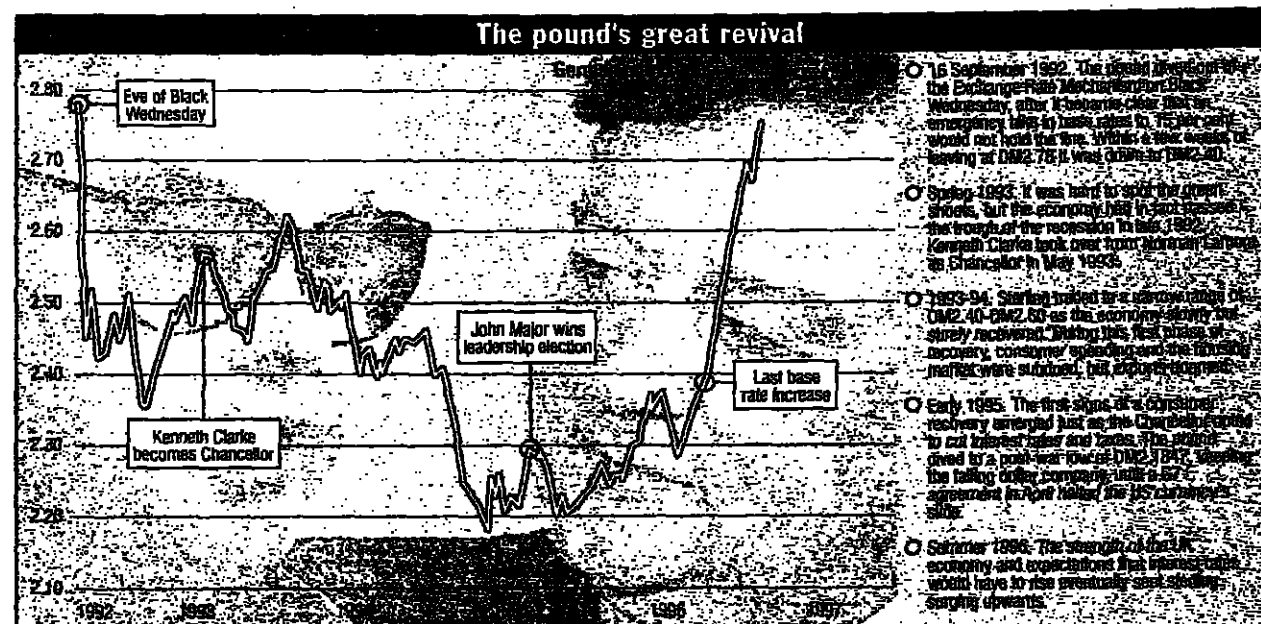
Virtually none of the City experts thinks the Chancellor will increase the cost of borrowing before then. "The chance of a rate rise before the election is remote in the extreme," said

Geoffrey Dicks at NatWest Markets.

"Any narrowing of Labour's lead in the polls would be seen as a negative for the pound," said Mr MacKinnon. In a reversal of the traditional pattern, the financial markets expect a tougher interest rate policy under Labour.

Investors also see a greater chance that a Labour government would take the pound into the single currency. That would diminish its current attractiveness as a safe haven from any possible turbulence related to the transition to European Monetary Union.

Economists foresee the exchange rate remaining strong until either British growth slows





The effect during the years of transition is that we will pay twice - once through our taxes for those already in retirement and a second time by paying the funding costs of future pensions for those joining the workforce.

Why not abolish the state pension altogether?

To misquote a famous advertisement for lager, "it's bold, but not that bold". Billed as the Government's big election idea, the planned pensions shake-up is not, when examined closely, as radical as it seems at first blush. Nor are its effects on the public finances as great, either in the short or long term, as might be thought.

What the Government could and perhaps should have done was to abolish the state pension altogether for those under the age of 25 and made the provision of private pensions compulsory; subject, of course, to the usual safety net. What is proposed, notwithstanding Labour's siren warnings, falls a long way short of this uncompromising but eloquent and rather more realistic approach to the problem.

The essence of these proposals is not an abolition of the minimum state pension at all, but a privatisation of it; the money still comes from the government but the pension becomes funded rather than paid out of current government revenues.

The effect during the years of transition from a pay-as-you-go to a funded minimum state pension is that we will pay twice - once through our taxes for those already in retirement and a second time by paying the funding costs of future pensions for those joining the workforce.

According to Andrew Dilnot of the Institute of Fiscal Studies, the accumulator effect of this phenomenon on the public finances would be approaching £2bn annu-

ally after 10 years, equivalent to 1p on the basic rate of income tax.

This will, to some extent, be offset by the proposed reversal in the tax treatment of pensions. The Government wants to make voluntary pension contributions payable out of net income, rather than gross, the quid pro quo being that pension income would be tax free. In itself, this is a reasonable enough thing since it will put pensions on an equal footing with other forms of savings like Tassas and PEPs. But the real benefit of it from the Government's point of view is that it provides a very considerable cash flow benefit, a one-off boost to tax revenues.

Even so, it is not going to be enough to offset the paying twice phenomenon. So the net effect of these proposals is that tax and spending are going to be higher, not lower.

The real difficulty with this big idea, however, is that it only partially addresses the true problem. This is not, as widely thought, some great demographic explosion in Britain's pension costs, for if the present arrangements were left as they are, national insurance contributions would actually fall.

No, the problem is not that we cannot afford the present system, but that it provides a level of benefit that falls a long way short of our expectations. In that sense Britain faces the very reverse of what our European partners are grappling with, where the difficulty is very generous state and company pension arrangements but not enough money to pay for them.

Funding the state pension goes some way to solving the problem, for at least future generations of pensioners will get the benefit of an accumulated investment return. Even so, the state pension will fall a long way short of the decent living wage people expect in their old age. The fundamental problem of how to force people to save adequately for their declining years is not being addressed at all.

Tobacco deal is still a long way off

The tobacco companies put their finger in the dyke 40 years ago and have held back the flood of litigation with relative ease ever since. They have had a good run when you consider the overwhelming weight of evidence against cigarettes, but it was never going to be possible to shore up the defences indefinitely against the might of the US legal system.

Yesterday's admission by BAT's chief executive, Martin Broughton, that the company would consider any "sensible proposals" from the lawyers queuing up to sue can be seen therefore as a pragmatic assessment of a lost cause. Sooner or later a case will go against the industry and when that happens, legal costs of \$100m a year will seem a minor irritation compared to the crushing financial costs that will follow.

Any deal, however, will remain elusive as

long as there is such a yawning gap between the expectations on both sides. The American tobacco industry makes a profit each year of about \$6bn and the lawyers aren't minded to settle for much less than that. BAT hints it might be prepared to pay as much as \$100m a year - which is what it spent last year on legal fees - in exchange for immunity from all present and future litigation. It's a big gap.

Two further problems remain. Assume a deal is struck whereby a proportion of profits are paid each year into a fund from which victims would be compensated and states reimbursed for their outlay on Medicaid. For such a levy to have any meaning, restrictions would have to be imposed on the companies to prevent them simply passing the cost on to consumers. Such a level of state intervention is simply inconceivable in America and it would never get Congressional approval. A deal is a way off yet.

Sir Bryan follows a well-trodden path

What are we to make of the appointment yesterday of Sir Bryan Carsberg, former head of the telecommunications watchdog Ofcom, to the board of Cable & Wireless Communications?

BT was full of indignation. What? Sir Bryan on the board of a competitor company

so soon after leaving the sensitive post of regulating the telecoms industry? But perhaps in all the excitement of merging with MCI, BT's corporate memory has become clouded. Wasn't it then Norman Tobbin who joined the BT board in the very same year as he quit the Cabinet and only two years after leaving the post of Secretary of State for Trade and Industry where he was directly responsible for the telecoms industry?

By contrast, Sir Bryan's period of quarantine seems positively epic. It is now five years since he left Ofcom. If, after all that time, there is still an element of the old boy network in operation, it is in the way Cable & Wireless was awarded a mobile telephone licence in the late 1980s. Lord Young, who was then in charge at the DTI, says it was Sir Bryan's decision. The rest of the world assumes it was down to Lord Young himself who, of course, went on to chair C&W.

There is a very simple way of resolving these difficulties. Ban all politicians, senior civil servants and regulators from taking up sinecures with companies they have previously been responsible for. That, however, really ought not to be necessary. Experience should teach companies and their investors to steer well clear of ministers and civil servants seeking a comfortable berth. British Steel, British Gas, NCF and, of course, BT have all underperformed the market after employing the services of former ministers. Could C&W Communications be the one to buck the trend?

Andersen Consulting revenues at record \$5bn

Roger Trapp

The growing trend for businesses to outsource non-core activities helped boost world-wide annual revenues at Andersen Consulting to a record \$5.3bn (£3.3bn) last year.

Though the firm reported "vigorous growth across all global areas", the Europe/Middle East/Africa/India region saw the biggest gain, up 32 per cent at \$1.9bn. Staff numbers in that region rose 21 per cent, to 16,128, compared with an overall 18 per cent rise to 44,801.

Business process management, as the US-based firm calls outsourcing, was the area with the biggest rise - fees rose 46 per cent to \$582m in the year to 31 December 1996. Among the clients contributing to that income were the industrial group DuPont, investment bank JP Morgan and troubled retail group Sears. At the same time, British Petroleum has extended a contract under which Andersen runs accounting and related administrative functions in the North Sea to other territories.

Vernon Ellis, European managing partner, explained that the firm was deliberately moving away from the provision of the straightforward information technology services for which it was well-known in the past towards helping organisations with all sorts of activities that, while essential, were not central to their businesses.

Although Andersen is seeing its business growing at well above the industry average, the whole market for outsourcing is expanding rapidly, driven by organisations' awareness that the business climate is changing so fast that they can survive only by concentrating on their strengths. What started in such areas as security, cleaning and

canteens has expanded into finance, logistics and even spare parts distribution as well as IT. Andersen says "business process management collaborations are as varied as the firm's clients and their needs".

Last week, both Capita, the business support services group that specialises in public-sector contracts, and Anglo-French computer services group Sema reported strong profits growth on the back of the increasing popularity of the concept.

Richard Holway, an independent computer industry analyst, attributed some of this to the fact the market was "in its infancy at the moment". But he predicted rapid expansion over the next 10 years. Industry sources forecast that the total world-wide business process outsourcing market will grow from about \$110bn in 1995 to more than \$282bn in 2000.

Organisations that focus on activities "further up the value chain" than mere IT outsourcing are expected to do particularly well, he added.

Mr Ellis added that organisations seeking to transform themselves to meet increasing competition and other challenges were looking to Andersen in particular because of its "ability to operate across borders and the ability to bring world-class knowledge and experience to bear".

Such breadth of knowledge and of geographical coverage also helped the firm, run as a separate unit from the accounting and business advisory arm since 1989, in other areas, he added.

For example, communications saw revenues rise 32 per cent to \$756m on the back of the firm's ability to transfer knowledge from the US telecoms market - which was deregulated earlier than others.

Grid appeals on pension ruling

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

National Grid yesterday appealed to the High Court against a ruling by the Pensions Ombudsman ordering the company to pay back £46.3m of surplus cash removed from its pension fund.

The move followed a final judgment last month by the Ombudsman, Dr Julian Farrand, which argued the Grid had "mis-used" the money, part of a £62.3m surplus identified in 1992. About 30 per cent of the surplus was used to increase pensioners' benefits while 70 per cent was used to improve the pensions element of the Grid's voluntary redundancy scheme.

The Grid also asked the court to postpone payment until the full hearing, expected in the next few months. However, the preliminary application to postpone the settlement could take place before the end of the group's accounting year, which runs to the end of March.

So far the Grid's accountants have argued the company does not need to make a formal charge for the pensions problem from its profits. Instead the amount will be listed in the accounts as a "contingent liability". The Grid said if it lost the case it would also have to increase its contributions to the fund by about £600,000 a year.

Last night a Grid spokesman insisted that the company believed it had acted lawfully over the pensions surplus. "We are challenging this on points of law. We will be arguing that the way we allocated the surplus was fair and lawful."

If the Grid loses the case privatised electricity companies could have to hand back almost £1bn to their pensions funds, which had their origin in a single scheme. National Power has already issued its own court proceedings to clarify the argument, while Eastern Electricity has said it could be forced to pay back £75m.



A STRONG YEAR OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

"Cadbury Schweppes produced record turnover, profits, margins and earnings and generated £137m free cash in 1996 against a background of organic expansion and acquisition."

1996 RESULTS			
	1996 £m	1995 £m	% Change
Sales	5,115	4,776	+ 7
Trading Profit	671	600	+12
Pre-Tax Profit	592	511	+16
Underlying Free Cash Flow	137	100	+37
Earnings per Share (FRS 3)	34.1	31.3	+ 9
Underlying EPS*	34.1	29.9	+14
Dividend per Share	17.0	16.0	+ 6

A final dividend of 11.8p is proposed which, with the interim of 5.2p already paid, makes a total of 17p per share for the year.

*Excluding disposal profits in 1995 of £15 million (£14 million after tax).

We are a truly global business operating in growth markets all around the world. In the US, Dr Pepper continues to outperform the soft drinks market and it is being launched internationally into new markets such as Mexico, Australia and Russia.

1996 saw outstanding performances by our core confectionery companies with product innovation the key to growth in most of our major markets.

At this early stage in the year we are confident of further growth and success in 1997 despite the impact of the stronger pound."

Dominic Cadbury
Dominic Cadbury, Chairman

Cadbury Schweppes

MANAGEMENT PROVEN IN THE MARKETPLACE

business

French hotel group to sell £260m stake in Compass

John Willcock

Compass shares fell 3.7 per cent to 713.75p yesterday after Accor, the French hotel group, said it would sell half of its 21.5 per cent stake in the catering company to cut debt.

Accor, the world's fourth biggest hotel operator, said it intended to place the 11.5 per cent stake in Compass with institutions through a global bookbuilding operation, co-ordinated by Dresner Kleinwort Benson.

At yesterday's prices the 11.5 per cent stake was worth about £260m. Accor shares rose 3.1 per cent to £7.99 after reaching a record high of £8.10 at one stage during the day.

Accor said that it was going ahead with the sale with the full knowledge and permission of Compass's management. The bookbuilding started yesterday afternoon and is expected to be completed by tomorrow.

Compass said it was not concerned about the drop in the price of its shares.

"We're all confident there will be strong demand for our shares," said Roger Matthews, Compass's managing director.

Francis Mackay, vice president and director general of Compass, said in Accor's statement: "The reduction of the Accor stake, in looking to large international institutional investors, allows us to widen the Compass shareholding and favours the company's liquidity."

Accor said it agreed not to cut its remaining Compass stake to under 10 per cent for 12 months. The upward limit on Accor's stake, if it were to buy in the market at a given time, was put at 11 per cent.

In a previous agreement, Accor could not sell more than 5 per cent of its holding in Compass over a 12-month period.

Accor gained the shares when Compass bought a one-third holding in Euxine France from Accor in September 1995, for which it received cash and about 70.7 million Compass shares.

Under the terms of the acquisition, Accor agreed to restrictions on the acquisition or disposal of Compass shares except with Compass's agreement.

The sale represents about 36.5 million Compass shares out of the 88.3 million shares Accor holds. The move is considered positive for the French hotel group because it has little management say in Compass, said analysts. The extra funds will also allow Accor to reduce debt and help it concentrate on core businesses.

"It's tremendous news for Accor," said Nigel Reed, an analyst at Paribas Capital Markets. "It means the company will focus more on improving the accommodation, travel arrangements and car-hire businesses."

Accor has been criticised for its debt load, slow growth in operating profits and under-performing units such as Europcar, the car rental company it owns with Volkswagen. The company's stock, however, has been buoyed by an upbeat outlook for the French hotel industry.

Accor is expected to reduce debt to £1.4bn this year from £1.7bn last year, analysts estimate. That comes after the company last month reported an 8.2 per cent rise in 1996 fourth-quarter sales to £7.17bn.

Accor, which has said it is trying to cut debt, focus on its core business and grow through acquisitions, yesterday said it formed a venture with NH Hoteles of Spain to open between 60 and 72 two-star hotels in Spain in the next seven years.

Succession under way at the top for Arjo Wiggins



Arjo Wiggins, the Anglo-French paper and packaging group, yesterday filled the gap created by last week's resignation of Daniel Melin, the chief executive. The announcement that he would be succeeded by Philippe Beyer, currently managing director, coincided with a report that Suppi, the largest paper and forest products group in South Africa, had recently held talks with Arjo Wiggins about merging their coated wood-free businesses.

Eugene van As, chairman of Suppi, said after the company's annual meeting that depressed pulp prices made a case for

consolidation in the European paper industry. "We have talked to a large number of players about the possibility of restructuring our coated wood-free business and one of those was Arjo," he said. Operating rates are high because companies have failed to curtail production. "In the short term, prices may decline," he said.

Arjo also said it was seeking a successor to Bob Stenham chairman (above), who turned 65 in January. He has agreed to remain chairman until the end of September.

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

Cadbury's new head finds the City's soft centre

The City seemed to warm to John Sunderland, the new chief executive of Cadbury Schweppes yesterday, marking the shares 19p higher at 529p after his first big presentation to the broking community. As well as the 16 per cent increase in full-year profits to £592m, analysts liked what they heard from him about focusing the group more on shareholder value and his promises that Cadbury would be less profligate in its use of equity issues than it has been in the past.

Mr Sunderland takes over the group at an interesting time. While chairman Dominic Cadbury was pouring cold water on the possibility of a demerger yesterday, he was also hinting that Cadbury could afford an acquisition of £1bn to £2bn following the sale of its half stake in bottling group Coca-Cola Schweppes Beverages for £623m.

This hints at Mr Sunderland's main headache. Though Cadbury Schweppes is big, it is not quite big enough to battle it out with the likes of Coca-Cola and Pepsi in drinks and Nestlé in confectionery.

In beverages, the acquisition of Dr Pepper has given Cadbury Schweppes more muscle, but the group still lost share in North America last year as a result of competitive pressures. Coca-Cola spiked Cadbury's guns with a marketing blitz for its Sprite brand before Cadbury had unveiled its Seven Up relaunch.

The reliance on third-party bottlers for its distribution following the CCSB sale seems to make Cadbury vulnerable, though Mr Sunderland was emphasising the strength of its licensing agreements with Coca-Cola yesterday. Hefty penalties would be imposed if any of its products were delivered by Coke.

In confectionery, Cadbury's expansion into new markets may take longer to generate returns than originally expected. The start-up in Russia has already cost £18m and disposable income is growing more slowly there than forecast. There are also problems with black market imports. China will take another two to three years to break even.

It is in confectionery that the big deal is likely to come as recent deals in this division have been relatively small.

Looking forward, Cadbury

Schweppes claims that Dr Pepper is growing ahead of its markets, while the long decline of the Seven Up brand is stabilising. But the threat remains from Coca-Cola, which is putting more resources behind Mr Pibb, a brand pitched directly against Dr Pepper.

In spite of the share price rise yesterday, many analysts left their 1997 forecasts unchanged at £565m-£580m. That puts the shares on a forward rating of 15. Given the competitive pressures and the recent run from last month's low of 468p, they are not worth chasing at these levels.

BICC finds a banana skin

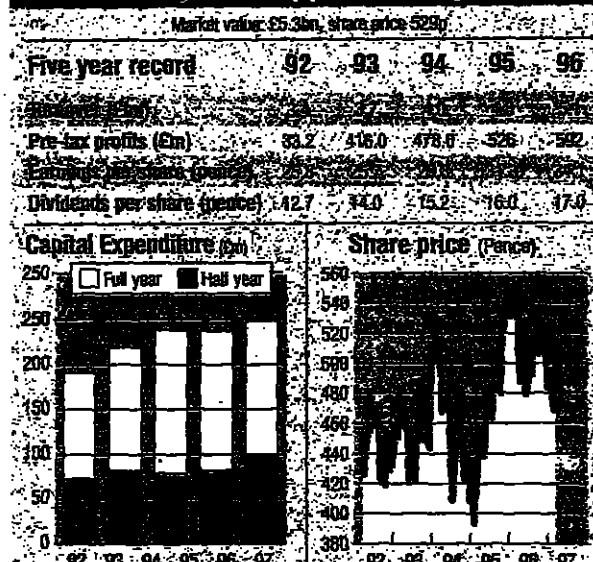
Alan Jones, the new-broom chief executive of BICC, had reason to feel a little bruised yesterday. Despite his delivering annual figures to December in line with forecasts and net debt at £80m close to half the level of expectations, the market marked the shares down 8p to 271.5p. They are now just above last October's 270p rights price, having underperformed the market by more than 50 per cent over the past three years.

Over the past two years, Mr Jones has unveiled a realistic strategy of revitalising the low-growth copper cables to construction business, while expanding the faster growing optical side, now aided by the £170m raised in the cash call.

There are signs that his efforts are bearing fruit. US cables' profits were up two-thirds and cables is close to his target of 20 per cent return on capital. Longer-term, the £115m or so to be spent over the next two years on optical fibres, cables and the Asia-Pacific region should deliver growth in the high teens for the most exciting third of BICC's business.

Full-year profits of £165m would put the shares on a forward multiple of 18. High enough.

Cadbury Schweppes: At a glance



IN BRIEF

• **Ivory & Sims**, the troubled Edinburgh-based fund management group, has hired a group of fund managers from Scottish Amicable to run its investments in smaller companies to plug the gap left by the sudden departure of its previous team. The new team comprises John Johnston, Stephen Grant and Glen Nimmo and they join the other new faces at Ivory & Sims which lost many of its senior managers when they quit to set up their own "boutique". Sir James McKinnon, chairman of Ivory & Sims, said: "The appointment of the well-respected UK smaller companies team is good news for the company. The board looks forward to the marked outperformance of the next 12 months continuing." The smaller companies team had been run by John Todd but he was one of the fund managers who defected earlier this year.

• **Higher bonuses and salaries drove up staff costs** at CS First Boston and Credit Suisse Financial Products, the investment banking units of Credit Suisse, the Swiss banking group. Staff costs shot up by 25 per cent in 1996 to 60n Swiss francs (£2.5bn) although trading income rose 33 per cent to SFr3.9bn. Despite operating income rising 17 per cent to SFr12.9bn, Credit Suisse reported its first ever loss of SFr2.43bn a result of "extraordinary structural and strategic measures". The bank has introduced a new method for calculating the amount of capital it needs to set aside for credit risk which resulted in a charge of SFr3.9bn which led the bank in December to warn it would report a technical loss for 1996. The loss was greater than the £1.2bn originally forecast because of a SFr1.95bn increase in general reserves for banking risk and a decision not to activate a SFr1.70m tax credit.

• **The Government should stay out of a European single currency**, a former member of the Chancellor's panel of independent economic forecasters said yesterday. Professor Patrick Minford of Liverpool University said a floating exchange rate regime was better than European monetary and economic union for all EU members. Even if the rest of the EU went ahead with EMU, the UK would be better off outside it, he said. "Tying the currency to a foreign vehicle exposes the economy to greater macroeconomic instability from world and supply-side shocks that floating largely protects against," Professor Minford said.

• **Sir Alick Rankin**, chairman of Christian Salvesen, said Sir Gerald Elliott, former chairman, should use the support he claims he has from shareholders to convene an extraordinary general meeting if he wishes to replace all or part of the current board. Sir Gerald has asked shareholders to vote against the board's resolution to approve a proposed special dividend of 34p per share which will be combined with a share consolidation. He said changes at the top were required in the long-term interests of shareholders. The vote will be put to shareholders at a meeting on 13 March.

• **Ibstock** has sold five of its brick manufacturing plants, which were the subject of undertakings it gave to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in July 1996 when it bought Redland Bricks for £53m. It will use the proceeds to reduce borrowings. The plants were sold to Ambion Brick Company which paid £44m on completion and will pay a further £5m in instalments, with interest, over 21 months from completion. A further sum of around £6m payable by Redland under an agreement entered into by Ibstock and Redland at the time of the acquisition of Redland Bricks.

Company Results				
	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
ABP (p)	223m (121m)	53.5m (48.4m)	118.9p (117.6p)	4.25p (4.25p)
BICC (p)	4.7m (4.2m)	1.12m (1.05m)	1.3p (9p)	12.5p (12.41p)
BAT Industries (p)	24.5bn (23.4bn)	2.5bn (2.28bn)	48.6p (47.7m)	18p (14.75p)
British Biotech (p)	8.5m (4.4m)	1.55m (4.05m)	4.3p (0.2p)	nd (-)
BWD Resources (p)	15.9m (14.7m)	2.54m (2.51m)	8.5p (8.3p)	6p (5p)
Cadbury Schweppes (p)	9.1bn (8.8bn)	£592m (£529m)	34.1p (31.3p)	17p (16p)
Finelist Group (p)	58.4m (52.6m)	7.1m (4.05m)	10.3p (9.2p)	2.2p (1.3p)
HTV (p)	129m (125m)	9.5m (12.1m)	10.3p (10.3p)	4.15p (3.75p)
Metal Ballistics (p)	32.9m (19.3m)	5.08m (4.75m)	34.4p (28.3p)	20p (16p)
Star Plus Group (p)	13.9m (14.0m)	3.73m (3.78m)	13p (12.1p)	11.2p (10.45p)
Trace Computers (p)	- (-)	0.15m (0.05m)	1.03p (4.25p)	nd (-)

(p) - Paid (t) - Interim (tt) - Before exceptional

Biotech moves towards first product launch

Magnus Grimond

British Biotech, the UK's leading biotechnology company, yesterday took a step closer to launching its first product by submitting an acute pancreatitis drug for European approval.

If the application for Zaccut to the European Medicines Evaluation Agency is successful, the company could see its first sales in some of the 15 countries of the European Union as early as next spring.

Keith McCullough, chief executive, described the move as an important achievement for the company, which has yet to make a profit and yesterday unveiled a further £17.6m deficit for the nine months to January.

"It marks a landmark in the history of the company... While we wait to hear from the EMEA, manufacturing and pre-marketing activities are under way in Europe and progress continues with the further clinical development of both Zaccut and Marimastat."

Hopes for Marimastat, an anti-cancer drug in late-stage clinical trials, have fuelled a huge surge in British Biotech's shares since November 1995. Zaccut may not be on the same scale as Marimastat but it could still be a big earner if the drug is approved. Some 250,000 people get pancreatitis every year in the US and the levels in Europe may not be far behind, with some 8 per cent of sufferers eventually dying. Analysts reckon Zaccut could achieve peak sales of between £30m and £40m by early next century.

Further details of the latest UK trial which is being used as the basis for the application will be released on 12 May. A US registration for the drug based on a second trial now under way will follow in due course, the company said.

Analysts were less enthusiastic than Mr McCullough about yesterday's news and the shares rose just 0.5p to 251.5p. One follower said there had been little new in the announcement and expressed some concerns over the data used to support the Zaccut application. Until further information became available in May it would not be possible to test how rigorously the company had been in differentiating the effects of the disease on the body's organs after the new treatment, he suggested.

Elsewhere, Marimastat is "continuing exactly on track", according to the company.

The nine months' losses, which were said to be "well within budget", compare with £15m for the comparable period of 1995-96 and include a third-quarter deficit of £1.55m, down from £4.05m before. The latest three months saw "turnover" soar from £4.5m to £8.53m after milestone payments totalling £4m from Glaxo Wellcome for a potential arthritis and inflammatory bowel treatment and £1.4m from Tanabe Seiyaku, the company's partner for Marimastat in Japan.

Cash of £193m includes the £143m raised from last year's rights issue.

ABP warns on windfall tax

Clifford German

Associated British Ports is not a utility, is not a monopoly, and should not be subject to the Labour party's windfall tax, chairman Sir Keith Stuart said yesterday. "There is an Ofgas, Ofwat, Ofel and Oferr. But there is no Ofport."

If Labour did impose a tax on ABP, "it would drive jobs and business to places like Rotterdam, a subsidised port," he said. Charles Orange, finance director, also shrugged off fears that the surge in sterling would damage UK exports and the group's business.

"Our revenues and payments are expressed in pounds, and any fall in exports would be counter-balanced by a rise in imports," he said.

Income from property resumed growth in the second half of the year, and could benefit from the upturn in the property market.

But the City was disap-

pointed with the results for 1996, which saw cargo handled rise by 3.3 per cent to 118 million tonnes and turnover increase 4.7 per cent to £247.2m.

Pre-tax profits for the year rose 5.8 per cent to £93.5m after deducting an expected £3m charge to get out of a loss-making pipe-coating joint venture.

If Labour had been expecting anything between £95m and £100m, and the shares, which had climbed 20 per cent since the middle of December, fell back 12.5p from the overnight peak of 318p. Only the dividend met expectations, increasing almost 20 per cent to 7.75p.

ABP plans another year of heavy capital investment, although it is unlikely to repeat last year's £83m.

Further out there are plans to develop both Hull and Immingham. The chairman is still hopeful of winning the contract to run the port of Ipswich, which he said was now a shadow of its former self.

Sherwood confirms he wants HTV licence fee to be reviewed

Clifford German

Louis Sherwood, chairman of HTV, yesterday confirmed this week's report in *The Independent* that he was seeking a review of the company's licence terms as he disclosed that its annual £24m licence fee saw a 25 per cent drop in last year's advertising and broadcast revenue.

He said the company was talking to the ITC over the terms of a review which could take effect in 1999, and which would be four years before the 10-year contract was due to expire.

Mr Sherwood and Christopher Rowlands, chief executive, hope for a "significant reduction" to reflect the vastly increased competition from other television channels. They are reluctant to put a figure on it, but some analysts think the cut could be as much as 50 per cent.

HTV will have to argue its case hard, but the company is

already exceeding its commitments to local programmes.

The remarks about the licence review accompanied HTV's annual results which, despite optimistic noises on prospects from Mr Sherwood, disappointed investors and sent the company's shares down by 10p to 350.5p.

Turnover last year edged up by 3 per cent to £139.3m, operating profit was almost unchanged at £12.2m and the cost of bringing in digital technology resulted in £2.1m of exceptional charges. Pre-tax profits plunged 18 per cent to £9.9m.

Earnings per share slipped by 2p to 8.5p. The dividend, how-

ever, goes up 11 per cent to 4.15p.

HTV has not experienced a surge in advertising revenues, unlike other ITV regions, particularly London. Revenue rose just 2 per cent to £96.8m and its share of the national cake fell from 6.01 per cent to 5.84 per cent. The telecom advertising war which has brought in rich pickings in the capital has yet to reach Wales. Mr Sherwood, however, believes that HTV's new four-year deal with its airtime sales agent, TSMs, will bring improved results.

The Harvest Entertainment programme sales division continued to prosper, pushing profits up 24 per cent to £5.6m on turnover up only 5 per cent to £32m. Its contribution to group profits shot up from 36 per cent to 44 per cent and could be over 50 per cent this year, boosted by an alliance with Warner Brothers. The first joint production, a 26-part animation series, *Zorro*, will be shown in the autumn.



Christopher Rowlands: Hopes for a 'significant reduction'

Taking Stock



PATRICK TOOHER

With earnings forecast to grow by over 25 per cent in 1998, the shares stand on a prospective p/e ratio of 22 and Wise Speke expects relative outperformance of at least 10 per cent over the next 12 months.

It wasn't just the software sector that entered uncharted territory. The FTSE 100 closed an all-time high for the second day running, up 2.4 at 4360.1 after touching 4367. Fears about higher US interest rates were eased after Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan said shares were

Cadbury Schweppes, the soft drinks and confectionery giant, had a yo-yo session. Its shares initially dipped 7p but recovering to close 19p firmer at 529p after an upbeat post-results presentation sent analysts away happy with new chief executive John Sunderland's performance. A chunky 13.8 million shares were traded.

Glaxo Wellcome, reporting today, saw nervous selling. The shares retreated 21p to 1035p on concerns about possible side-effects of steroid asthma inhalers and a profits

But talk again lifted Reed, up 39p to 1181.5p, with Reuters. The rumoured sultor, off 15.5p to 644p. **Emap** closed 12p better at 747p, as chief executive Robin Miller became the latest board member to buy shares, since managing director David Arculus quit last week.

FKL still reeling from its failed bid for doorknobs group Newman Tanks, rose 4.5p to 190p on heavy volume of 4.1m as UBS reiterated its buy advice.

Sunderland slumped 32.5p to 675p. The shares are heading back to their 585p flotation price after an embarrassing 4-0 home defeat at the hands of Tottenham heightened relegation fears.

Creator has been successfully completed and is being adopted by Time Warner and Virgin. The product, which allows web page designers to embed video in their pages, is now ready for marketing and will be released at the Spring Internet World show in Los Angeles next week.

Shield Diagnostic's dazzling run continued. The shares have sky-rocketed from 130p six weeks ago to last night's close of 605p, up 44.5p. Shield's test to identify people at risk from heart disease received encouraging results in a trial of 2,500 patients at St Bart's in London. The outcome of a study covering 16,000 patients at the University of Houston in Texas is expected any day now.

[illegible]

Rich man, poor man, superstar

The Church of England entered the political fray again at the start of this week with a fresh call for help for the poorest 30 per cent in society. Income distribution has become an urgent moral matter for the church because of the sharp increase in inequality during the past 20 years. Incomes in Britain are growing faster than anywhere else in the industrialised world.

We are still not as polarised as the US, where the economist Richard Freeman has described the deterioration in prospects for unskilled American men, especially young men, as an "economic disaster". For example, not only are these men more likely to be unemployed, if they were in work their pay, adjusted for inflation, actually fell by a staggering amount during the 1980s - by a fifth for young males with less than 12 years of schooling.

The most likely explanation for the increasing inequality in the US and UK, and rising unemployment on the Continent, is a growing divergence in people's ability to create economic value - their productivity, or underlying ability to earn.

When this occurs, one of two things can happen. Either the distribution of earnings will widen to a corresponding degree, and employers will continue to be willing to hire the least productive people because they can pay them relatively less. Or, if the framework of employment legislation prevents this, then companies will stop wanting to hire the individuals with lowest earnings ability. Unemployment for the unskilled will stick at a high level.

New technology is a highly plausible explanation for greater inequality in how productive people are in their work. The case is well made by two American economists, Robert Frank of Cornell University and Philip Cook of Duke University, in their book *The Winner-Takes-All Society*. Their argument is that information and communications technology has extended the "superstar" phenomenon to wide areas of the economy. Thus any opera diva, tennis champion or movie

star can easily reach a worldwide audience. Consumers will prefer to see or hear them, even at a slightly higher cost, because of their known star quality. There is much less of a market for the tenth or twentieth best.

Frank and Cook point out that superstar status increasingly applies outside the conventional areas of sport and entertainment. A global brand will make its manufacturer far more money than a very similar product that does not achieve the same recognition in the market place. That means there are superstar product designers, engineers, advertising executives and so on - anybody with a proven record of success will become a celebrity in his or her own field. The authors write: "The winner-takes-all markets... have permeated law, journalism, consulting, medicine, investment banking, corporate management, publishing, design, fashion, even the hallowed halls of academia."

Information and communications technology has helped this spread in two ways. It decreases the cost of delivering a service or product and it increases the market for the service. If I am a star opera singer, once I have sung and recorded an aria it can be very cheaply disseminated; and the market for my singing is likely to be world-wide, not just the people who can get to the nearest opera house. The same is true if I am a star surgeon. Technology means I can diagnose and treat patients around the world, and I will be known around the world.

Frank and Cook go on to argue that this is inefficient in economic terms. They have a



Diane Coyle

As economic inequality grows, the winner-takes-all ethos is spreading to all sections of society

series of arguments. First, they say, superstar economies generate income inequality, which is a social bad. True, but not an economic inefficiency. Second, they argue that winner-takes-all markets cause effort to be misallocated. Everybody wants to be a superstar, so too many people pile into professions where the winner-takes-all conditions apply. They write: "In increasing numbers our best and brightest graduates pursue top positions in law, finance, consulting and other overcrowded arenas, forsaking careers in engineering, manufacturing, civil service, teaching and other occupations in which an infusion of additional talent would yield greater benefit to society."

Apart from the fact that this contradicts their earlier argument that the superstar phenomenon now encompasses engineers, surgeons and professors, it is also breathtakingly value-laden about what careers are "socially useful". The despised law, finance, and consulting form a large and growing part of modern post-industrial economies. If they are so much in demand it is hard to see in what sense they are not useful.

The third argument relies on a separate point about overcrowding into less socially useful areas. Frank and Cook see an analogy with the "tragedy of the commons" whereby common

land is overgrazed because individuals' private benefits carry a social cost. So, they suggest, there is overcrowding into the field of mergers and acquisitions law because successful candidates do not realise that their job is gained only at the expense of a rival's failure to get in. All those failed candidates would contribute more to the economy if they had decided to be teachers in the first place.

The analogy is false, of course. Land is in fixed supply; the supply of lawyers - or demand for lawyers - is growing. The fact that not all of them become stars does not imply that there is an inefficiently large number of lawyers. If there were, real pay for lawyers at the bottom of the heap would decline.

The book's conclusion - that very high incomes should be very heavily taxed - plays well in some political circles. It would be an interesting proposition to put to the voters - should incomes over, say, £100,000 a year, be taxed at 75 per cent? Governments that tried it would probably find many of their "winners" emigrating.

Nor would tax punishment change the underlying economic forces. In a weightless economy driven by information technology, individuals' earning power varies more than in a heavy economy. Different people doing the same job will actually be serving different markets - from a small-town solicitor or attorney through a specialist employment lawyer to a global star every international corporation wants to hire for its most important cases. In fact, the dispersion will probably increase.

In the long run, the hope must be that the technological revolution will create a rising economic tide that eventually benefits everybody. For all the social horrors and inequality of the Industrial Revolution, it is easy to forget that it had transformed living standards within a generation. The inequality and tension are features of the transition. Policies for adjusting to a new kind of economy will have to focus on helping the poor rather than penalising the rich. Which is where the Church of England came in.

There are so many expeditions to the North Pole setting off around now that soon the top of the world will resemble a BT agave.

The latest is Julian Hanson Smith, the 35-year-old managing director of Financial Dynamics, a firm of City PR people.

His team, which will drag sledges 150km from the 89th Parallel to the Pole, consists of: Charles Shaw, managing director of Morgan Lovell, an office refurbishment company; Richard Hickson, a self-employed management consultant; Joe Meacham, who plays bass guitar in the London production of *Grease*; and Pen Hadlow, of the Polar Exploration Company, Somerset, who will guide the expedition.

"We're aiming to raise £100,000 for the charity Whizz Kids, which seeks to give mobility to handicapped children," says Mr Hanson Smith. "When we get to the North Pole, James Heath, who's 11 and confined to a wheelchair by cerebral palsy, will be flown in to meet us. That'll be on 21 April, the Queen's birthday. We'll take a Union Jack with us, and a rifle, although I'm told polar bears don't go that far north."

Mr Hanson Smith has been training by running around a field with a tyre tied behind him. "My wife can't believe it," he says. Neither can I.

There are sparks flying at Christian Salvesen, the transport group, as it prepares for next week's vote on a special dividend. The management face strong opposition over the payout from the Salvesen family, who hold 30 per cent of the company. Since 44 per cent of the company's share register consists of private shareholders, the Salvesen family has embarked on a phone campaign to put their case to these individuals.

Thus it was this week that the mother of Chris Masters, Salvesen's chief executive, re-

Training for the North Pole is a tiring business

PEOPLE & BUSINESS



What a drag: Yet another expedition is heading north

ceived a call encouraging her to vote against the special dividend. Will she support her son? We'll have to wait for the egg.

As BZW commences its move to Canary Wharf, I hear it has poached some of neighbouring Morgan Stanley's mail room staff.

Two people from the Morgan Stanley mail room left some time ago to set up their own company, and when they won the contract to run BZW's room they took another couple out of the Morgan bank. Sounds like Morgan had better batten down its tea ladies.

Gavin Strang, shadow agriculture minister, has promised that Labour will safeguard the future of the British pinta delivered to the door. Does this have anything to do with the fact Northern Foods, whose chairman, Chris Haskins, is an informal adviser to Labour, delivers more than 1.5 million doorstep pintas every day? Mr Haskins is being touted as a possible Labour peer if Tony Blair's lot get in.

A Northern spokesman says: "I don't think there is a connection. Chris is a good friend of Gavin Strang, but Labour have been saying this [about deliveries] for years."

You can't get much worse luck than Ronson, the maker of cigarette lighters. In January 1996 its Newcastle factory went up in flames, knocking a £1m hole in the company's accounts.

It wasn't, however, due to over-zealous testing of lighters. In fact, the fire started in another factory. The flames leapt from one of the Ronson premises, where lighter fluid was being stored. "Until then the fire looked containable, but when it reached the lighter fluid it looked like the Gulf War."

The Inland Revenue is promoting its self-assessment scheme on 3 million Chinese and Indian takeaways. The "Addis" carry the merry caption: "Don't get stuffed by Self Assessment."

When Labour's Brian Donohue asked the Chancellor Ken Clarke to justify this novel promotion, the noted gourmand replied: "According to research, 60 per cent of self-employed manual trades people... regularly eat Chinese takeaways."

Watch out for "New Labour, New Danger" on your next carton of prawn-fried rice.

John Willcock

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	1.5088	0.9-0	38.25	1000	1.5088	22.38	82.80
Canada	2.0271	01-06	100.82	13691	1.7115	33.31	59.96
Germany	2.7548	70-83	307.96	17172	1.7115	33.31	59.96
France	9.2506	202-21	675.64	17172	1.7115	33.31	59.96
Italy	7.2823	26-42	71.94	17172	1.7115	33.31	59.96
Japan	11.9540	99-99	288.29	12138	54.23	67.15	70.00
Spain	1.6581	24-26	41.46	10823	71.2	36.39	70.00
Belgium	5.5819	15-10	42.35	35.296	7.5	20.47	26.256
Denmark	10.504	250-190	713.60	63500	59.79	236.37	387.00
Netherlands	3.0889	35-17	246.22	12250	39.27	11.16	11.9
Norway	10.323	5-1	5.5555	5.4	11.9	11.9	11.9
Sweden	11.176	280-210	750.67	63424	30.25	79.49	40.999
Switzerland	2.0312	2.6-1.9	61.80	64.85	69.03	170.250	844.496
Australia	1.2227	220-190	640.330	763.99	41.16	152.10	4.4628
South Africa	2.3833	33-84	274.250	14806	49.46	145.09	0.622
Malaysia	2.0312	2.6-1.9	61.80	64.85	69.03	170.250	844.496
New Zealand	1.2227	220-190	640.330	763.99	41.16	152.10	4.4628
Singapore	1.2227	220-190	640.330	763.99	41.16	152.10	4.4628
India	5.5819	15-10	42.35	35.296	7.5	20.47	26.256
Saudi Arabia	9.2506	202-21	675.64	17172	1.7115	33.31	59.96
South Korea	2.7548	70-83	307.96	17172	1.7115	33.31	59.96

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	16.000	0.9999	Nigeria	120.000	0.0100
Australia	1.2227	0.6403	Oran	64.567	0.0150
Brazil	1.2227	0.6403	Pakistan	24.398	0.0410
China	8.2773	0.1250	Philippines	24.398	0.0410
Denmark	5.5819	0.1778	Russia	3.292	0.3046
France	9.2506	0.1080	South Africa	9.2506	0.1080
Germany	2.7548	0.3603	Taiwan	43.448	0.0230
Italy	7.2823	0.1369	UAE	5.944	0.1671
Japan	11.9540	0.0836			

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount; subtract from spot rate. Rates quoted low to high are at a premium; add to spot rate. Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals. For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0891 123 3033. Calls cost 50p per minute (day) 45p other times.

Interest Rates

Country	600%	Germany	5.50%	US	5.75%	Japan	0.50%
Base	5.50%	Discount	5.50%	Prime	5.75%	Discount	0.50%
France	3.50%	Discount	5.50%	Fed Funds	5.25%	Discount	2.50%
Italy	7.50%	Prime	4.75%	14 Day Repo	6.00%	Discount	3.00%
Denmark	3.00%	Discount	3.00%	Sweden	4.00%	Discount	1.00%
Netherlands	2.70%	Discount	3.25%	Repo 1 day	4.00%	Lombard	4.15%

Bond Yields

Country	5yr yield	10yr yield	Country	5yr yield	10yr yield
UK	7.0%	8.3%	Netherlands	7.5%	8.3%
France	6.25%	6.4%	Spain	7.0%	7.0%
Germany	6.5%	6.8%	Italy	7.75%	7.75%
Japan	6.0%	6.1%	Belgium	6.0%	6.25%
Australia	10.0%	7.5%	Sweden	4.0%	4.0%
Canada	8.0%	4.6%	ECU OAT	6.0%	4.81%
South Africa	5.5%	4.8%			

Yields calculated on local basis. Source: Reuters.

Money Market Rates

Instrument	Overnight	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%
Sterling CDs	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%
Local Authority Deps	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%
Discount Market Deps	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%
Treasury Bills (Govt)	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%
Dollar CDs	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%
EDU Linked Dep	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%

Tourist Rates

Country	£ Buys	£ Buys	£ Buys
Australia (Dollars)	1.9901	French Francs	6.540
Canada (Dollars)	1.9901	German Marks	2.942
Denmark (Krone)	1.9901	Italian Lira	2.942
France (Francs)	1.9901	Japanese Yen	2.942
Germany (Marks)	1.9901	Netherlands (Guilder)	2.942
Italy (Lira)	1.9901	Portugal (Escudo)	2.942
Japan (Yen)	1.9901	Spain (Peseta)	2.942
Netherlands (Guilder)	1.9901	Sweden (Krona)	2.942
Portugal (Escudo)	1.9901	Switzerland (Franc)	2.942
Spain (Peseta)	1.9901	United States (Dollar)	1.9901
Sweden (Krona)	1.9901		
Switzerland (Franc)	1.9901		
United States (Dollar)	1.9901		

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement Price	High/Low	Open Interest
Long City	112.12	112.12	112.12
Short City	112.12	112.12	112.12
Long City	112.12	112.12	112.12
Short City	112.12	112.12	112.12

Life FTSE Index Option

Series	4300	4350	4400	4450	Call/Put
Mar	7524	4244	1870	6109	Total
Apr	10857	7779	31702	30732	
May	15478	10339	79124	57151	
Jun	186101	134117	107142	82158	110161

Energy

Contract	Settlement Price	High/Low	Open Interest
Long City	112.12	112.12	112.12
Short City	112.12	112.12	112.12
Long City	112.12	112.12	112.12
Short City	112.12	112.12	112.12

Commodity Indices

Index	Value	Change	Index	Value	Change
Oil	19.00	+0.06	Gold	380.00	+0.06
Grain	19.00	+0.06	Silver	380.00	+0.06
Metals	19.00	+0.06	Platinum	380.00	+0.06
Softs	19.00	+0.06	Palladium	380.00	+0.06

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ABN AMRO	1.5088	ABN AMRO	1.5088	ABN AMRO	1.5088
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sport

'Unless we go to a system that suits us, four at the back and four in midfield, we might as well get the next plane home'

An enterprise which Terry Fenwick remembers with some satisfaction is the dressing-room mutiny he led during the 1986 World Cup finals in Mexico when it looked as though England would be humiliated by elimination before the knock-out stages.

At the squad meeting called after a 1-0 draw against Mexico (England were defeated by Portugal in their opening game) that saw Ray Wilkins sent off and Bryan Robson disabled by the recurrence of an old shoulder injury, Fenwick argued boldly against the strategy drawn up by England's manager, Bobby Robson, and his chief assistant, Don Howe.

Pointing out that serious positional problems were being caused for him and his fellow centre-back, Terry Butcher, by the advanced deployment of England's full-backs, Fenwick

said: "Unless we go to a system that suits us, four at the back and four in midfield, we might as well get the next plane home." Improving considerably as a result, England qualified by defeating Poland and went on to lose a quarter-final against Argentina.

Considering that football managers generally are averse to outbursts of independence, my first thought at the time was that Fenwick had placed his international future in jeopardy. This was possibly the case because although he turned out twice more in the tournament he saw the last of his 19 international appearances.

Incidentally, after confronting Robson, and while still on his feet, Fenwick shot a backward glance to see if anyone was with him. The only voices raised in support were those of Peter Reid, now manager of Sun-

derland, and the former West Ham centre-half, Alvin Martin. "I'm sure others agreed with me," Fenwick said when he spoke last week, "but it was disappointing that only two had the guts to stand up and be counted."

As Fenwick is now making significant progress as manager of Portsmouth with a further opportunity for advancement on Sunday when Chelsea visit Fratton Park in the FA Cup quarter-finals, a good question is how much independence would he tolerate in the quest for collective understanding. "Well, there has to be room for input," he smiled.

The remark reminded me of a instructive tale told by an outstanding coach, Alan Brown, who managed Burnley, Sheffield Wednesday and Sunderland. "At Burnley one of our most successful free-kicks came



KEN JONES

from an idea put forward by the shyest apprentice," he said.

One advantage Fenwick holds over the seven other surviving managers in the FA Cup, all of whom have yet to collar a major trophy, is the assistance of a chairman who knows what he is talking about. In

for a pound when he took control of Portsmouth recently, Terry Venables was at Derby last weekend running an astute eye over Portsmouth's Cup opponents.

Having grown up under Venables at Crystal Palace along with five other members of the club's youth team who went on to achieve full international status, Fenwick is understandably grateful for his chairman's occasional interventions. "In fact I'd be happy to see Terry on the practice ground more often," he said. "He's got such a terrific mind for the game that you can always learn something from him."

What Fenwick has already proved is that he can stand up for himself in adversity. Earlier in the season, when things were not going well, he came in for a great deal of adverse com-

ment. In common with all managers he discovered that most newspaper critics are naturally perverse, and admiration is wrung from them only by a particularly impressive performance. Hearing the Pompey Times does not entirely blank out the fact that it isn't so long since he was under fire from disgruntled supporters.

One thing Fenwick can refuse personally is that all those who make a name for themselves in sport today become so conceited as to become unconsciously ungrateful. The youngest, at 35, of the Cup's surviving managers, he said: "It isn't a case of feeling humble, but I appreciate the opportunity that came along here."

Some shrewd signings, including David Hillier, picked up cheaply from Arsenal, the former soldier, Lee Bradbury, and Mathias Svensson, who

was a car salesman and part-time professional with Elsborg in the Swedish Second Division until recommended by Ted Buxton, have helped to establish Portsmouth as serious promotion contenders. "That's the most important thing," Fenwick said.

But, of course, it is difficult for Fenwick to keep his player's minds off the Cup. "The closer it gets the larger it becomes," he smiled. "It will be something for them to look back on... the final, I mean."

The next time you see a repeat of Diego Maradona's infamous fisted goal against England in 1986 look who moves the most vigorous protest, following the referee back to the half-way line. "It still baffles me that the rest of the team doesn't join in," he said. He never was one to go quietly.

Baulch wonder over one lap

Mike Rowbottom meets the Welsh sprinter whose rise takes another stride at tomorrow's world indoor championships

Jamie Baulch still winces at the recollection of his last experience at the Palais Omnisports in Paris-Bercy, where he returns tomorrow in search of the world indoor 400 metres title.

The 23-year-old Welshman, whose unbeaten run indoors this season has established him as Britain's clearest medal prospect, crashed to the track in the 400m final of the 1994 European indoor championships after a collision that arose partly from his lack of experience.

Baulch, whose main achievement until then had been winning a world junior sprint relay gold medal in 1992, recalls the moment when his French challenge ended shortly before the bell for the final lap.

"Everyone broke across the track and then the Russian guy caught his feet up with mine," he said. "I fell so hard, there was no way I could continue. I was almost crying. If I remember rightly, I had hurt my arm and my knee."

"I was very inexperienced. I didn't know how to run a 400 properly. But I think I've moved on from there in the last couple of years."

That is an understatement. Since his setback, Baulch, with the coaching assistance of fellow Welshman Colin Jackson, the world high hurdles record holder, has established himself as one of the leading British one-lap runners at a time when the quality in that event is at an all-time high.

Last season, after winter training with Jackson and Linford Christie in Australia, Baulch lowered his 400m outdoor best to 44.57sec, missing out on an individual place at the Olympic trials but earning a silver medal in the Atlanta relay alongside Roger Black, Mark Richardson and Iwan Thomas.

This year, after another highly profitable sojourn Down Un-

der, he has been unbeaten indoors, taking 0.17sec off Todd Bennett's 12-year-old British and Commonwealth 400m record of 45.56 in the process.

That European final in 1994 launched the career of another British 400m runner, Du'aine Ladjo, who won the event and added the outdoor gold medal later that year before retaining his indoor title in Stockholm last spring. But, after a disappointing Olympics, a disillusioned Ladjo has now turned to the decathlon event. The curious turn of events is not lost on Baulch.

"Sometimes when guys are winning they can't handle it when they lose," he said. "But all through my athletics career, ever since I was 10 or 11,

'Sometimes when guys are winning they can't handle it when they lose'

I have had defeats. As a junior I was very small and I was always, always losing. But in a way, I think it was a good thing for me that I learned to take a beating."

"I've had some real disappointments, of course. Seeing Roger and Iwan run in the Olympic final and thinking: 'It couldn't have been me', that wasn't fun. But things don't get to me too deep. I'm not one of those people who mope around thinking: 'Oh God, I didn't do this. I didn't do that.' I just like to get on with things."

Jamie, adopted when he was five months old by Marilyn and Alan Baulch and brought up in Cwmbran, clearly has a natural resilience: a natural ebullience, too. His habitual grin

from beneath ginger dreadlocks has been one of the cheeriest features of a troubled new year for British athletics.

The key to his advance, he maintains, lies in the work he has done with some of the best sprinters in the world. "I've listened a lot this winter, and everything I've been told I've remembered," he said. "Once you've got down to 44.5 for the 400, that is the way you improve."

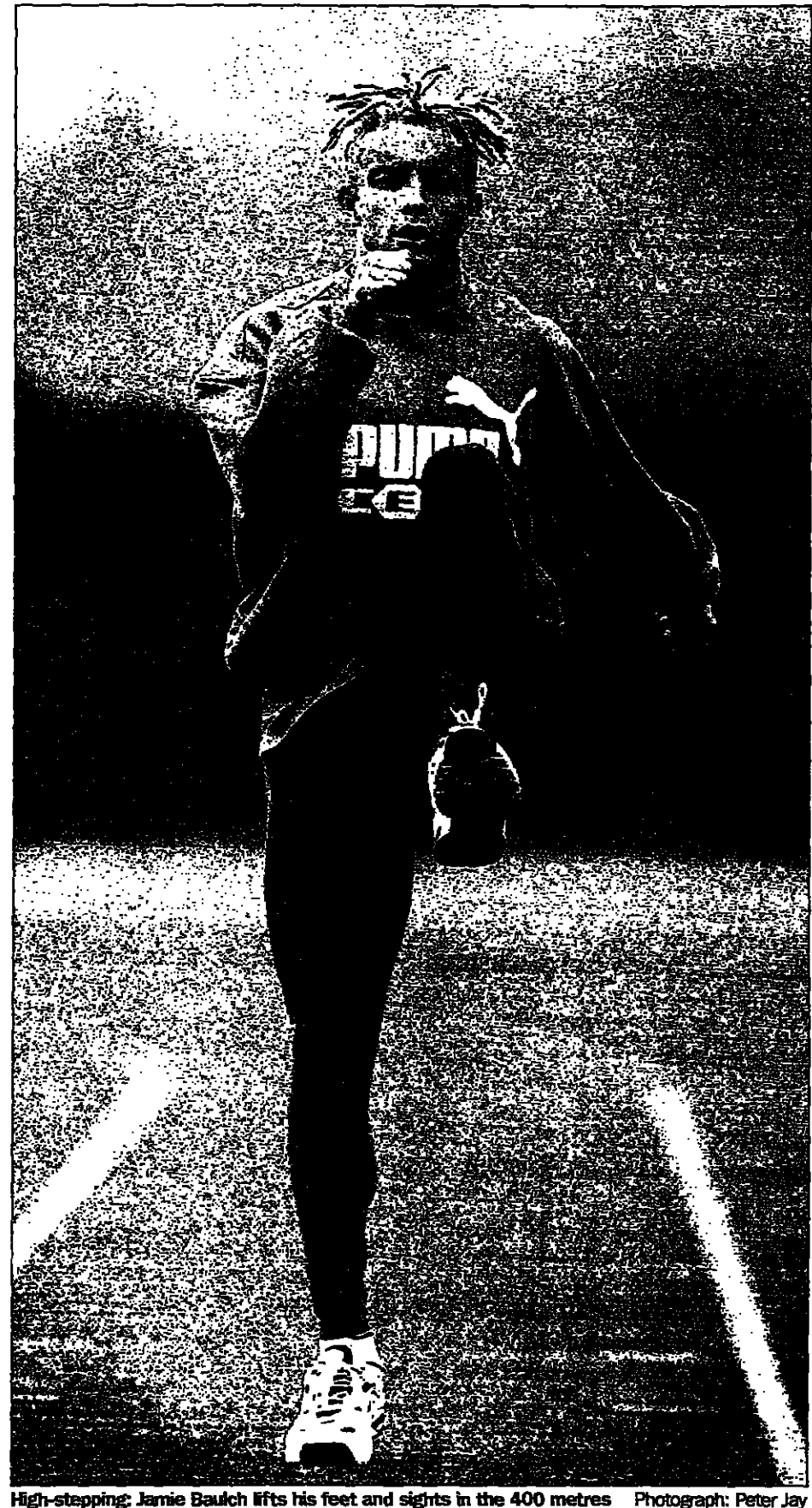
"Lots of things that Linford said to me. I thought, 'Oh God, it's so easy.' He was setting the training routines for everyone, and running alone with us. He would tell us to lift our hips as we came round the 200 metres bend. Or he would say that when you get to 20, 30 metres, you are at your full speed, so why try to run any faster? I would get to 50 metres and then try to kick, which would slow me up. It seems obvious now I think about it."

"If you are training with someone who is trying too hard you will tense up yourself. If you are with experienced runners like Linford or Frankie Fredericks you can't believe how relaxed they are and that rubs off on you."

"Linford is 6ft 3in and I am 5ft 8in, so when I am running next to him I'm doing everything I can to match his stride, to do what he is doing by picking my knees up. You get into good habits."

Profitable habits, as well. Last month Baulch earned his highest single payday so far - £12,000 - by winning the Ricoh Indoor Grand Prix. "It's come all of a sudden for me," he said. "If I ever get to the level where Colin and Linford are, I would love it, but I haven't really thought about it to be honest. I'm not going to Paris for money. I just want a title."

The Palais Omnisports awaits part two of The Fall and Rise of Jamie Baulch.



High-stepping: Jamie Baulch lifts his feet and sights in the 400 metres Photograph: Peter Jay

Williams will keep eyes on the road

Derick Allsop assesses the chances of the champions retaining their drivers' and constructors' F1 championship

If tunnel vision is a prerequisite for world championship success, then Williams-Renault can abandon all hope of retaining their drivers' and constructors' titles this season. The concerns and possible ramifications of the Ayrton Senna trial, the legal wrangling over the future of their chief designer, Adrian Newey, and a heavy-duty political dispute within Formula One ought to be enough of a distraction for any organisation.

Frank Williams, founder and patriarch of this remarkable racing operation, glumly contends the trial and tribulations could take their toll and no one would be so insensitive as to suggest this is "just crafty old Frank, laying it on".

But such is the order and structure of what is, after all, an engineering firm, such is the ingrained expertise, that it is difficult to imagine it could be deflected so significantly off course. Once the racing team are at the race track, the competitive impulses take over, and once Jacques Villeneuve and Heinz-Harald Frentzen are strapped into their cars, the mission to win grands prix will be all-consuming.

Williams' performances in testing indicate their drivers are again likely to win on a regular basis this season. Some observers believe the champions are in even better shape than they have been prepared to let on, that Williams has instructed his drivers not to show their hand.

That would not be surprising and the other half of the old double act, Williams' long-time technical wizard, partner, confidant and friend, Patrick Head, smiles off the speculation with a comment: "We just get on with doing our own thing."

Smiling is an emotional excess Williams is not renowned for, as Head acknowledges: "People say to me, 'That partner of yours is the most miserable bugger, why doesn't he ever have a smile on his face?' I tell them he's not. You should have seen him when they had him in that Renault Espace, and whisked him round Silverstone. He was smiling then all right."

For those of us fortunate enough not to be in a wheelchair, it is impossible to comprehend the distress Williams has to endure, not least when a television camera is constantly focused on him. He once confided he found that a source of considerable discomfort.

But then engage him on level terms, on a wide range of topics and especially on motor racing, and the conversation flows and the grin is ear-to-ear. He is an intelligent, articulate, quick-witted man. He is also a hard-nosed boss who is not afraid to make tough and controversial decisions. Ditto Head.

The difference is that Head finds it less easy to suppress what he thinks and sometimes that makes crafty old Frank squirm.

So it is that while Damon Hill may despise both of them for dropping him at the end of last season, Head is the one he derides for his "outrageous and hilarious" opinions. Williams admits he may have made a big mistake in replacing the world champion with Frentzen, and Head has hinted they might not have done so had they not

been committed to an existing agreement with the German.

Down the years, Williams have fallen out with a number of their drivers. Nelson Piquet, Nigel Mansell and Alain Prost all departed as champions. They have certainly made stubborn stances over money or the ranking of their drivers. Some contend their laissez-faire policy with Mansell and Piquet cost them the championship in 1986. Hill argues it cost them in 1995. Head concedes that his man management has not been of the highest order. Again, for example, Hill.

Williams put the team first, reminding us that drivers come and go while most of the rest remain loyal to the factory cause. You do sense, however, they relish any opportunity to cut a driver down to size and emphasise the excellence of their car.

You can, of course, afford to embrace that doctrine when you win as consistently as Williams do. Last season they equalled Ferrari's record of eight constructors' championships. They can afford, also, to maintain that they cannot afford the best driver in the world.

It is just as well for the Formula One show that Michael Schumacher joined Ferrari rather than Williams, and there is no doubt that piece of business had the blessing of grand prix racing's marketing man, Bernie Ecclestone.

Williams droops over the talents of Schumacher, much as he did over Senna's, but it is not part of a driver's make-up to concede the next man is better and confident.

Head, Frentzen nor Villeneuve appreciate the on-going Schumacher eulogy. Head revealed that Villeneuve "screws when he hears everybody regard Schumacher as the man," but was adamant: "If Schumacher had the best equipment he'd have to be a favourite."

He went on: "We've got a car that is capable of winning the championship but I'm not fully satisfied it will be reliable at the first race. Jacques has all the armory in terms of skill, brain power and race craft to get the job done, and would have to be one of the favourites."

Jacques has brought his oval experience into Formula One and I was amazed that in Japan, at the final race last season, he was able to go through a certain corner at 130-140 kph. He came back grinning, saying: 'Told you it is possible to do it'."

The racer in 25-year-old Villeneuve has patently won the approval of the racer in Head, and indeed, in Williams. Frentzen, 29, is a less obviously cavalier character, but then the racing has yet to start.

Williams said: "He's a quiet person, hasn't sworn at the mechanics yet. But that doesn't mean he's too gentle. We've not seen him under pressure yet."

Head summarised: "I think Jacques and Heinz-Harald will be very similar in lap times in qualifying, but Jacques could have the edge in the races."

Williams and Head admit they wonder how long they can retain their competitive edge. "We'll have to go some time," Williams said, "and we've been thinking about it. It may be two years, or 15 years. I don't know. I just hope it's well down the road yet."



Williams: Hard-nosed

West Indies and India start test of character

Cricket

TONY COZIER reports from Kingston

While Australia and South Africa battle out what they term "The Real Decider", an ocean away the West Indies and India start a Test series here today without such grandiose claims.

The West Indies are just back from losing "The Decider" in

Australia and can only erase the notion that they are a waning power through a convincing triumph over opponents who have never travelled well. On six previous Caribbean tours, India have won just twice in 28 Tests.

As the West Indies struggled in Australia, India's aversion to foreign fields was being exposed in South Africa where they capitulated in the first two Tests before having the better of the third.

This will be a real challenge for their young captain, Sachin Tendulkar, a god to India's fanatical cricketing millions. The packed programme has made the exercise as much a matter of the survival of the fittest as a test of skill for a team who have been tested to the hilt by the scheduling of six Tests and a dozen one-day internationals in three different countries in the past five months. Another

five Tests and four one-day internationals lie ahead in the coming eight weeks here.

The grind has taken its toll. The fast bowler Jagadev Srinath has sought treatment for the recurring tendinitis in his shoulder and the choice of a little known off-spinner, Noid David, as his replacement shows that he is irreplaceable.

West Indian fast bowlers have also suffered from the itinerary,

with Kenny Benjamin, Cameron Cuffy and Nixon McLean all out of action with one strained muscle or another. The selectors have taken some heed of international trends and included a new leg-spinner, Ravi Lewis, in their 13, but they have also picked a new fast bowler of typical West Indian dimensions in Franklyn Rose, who is likely to join Curly Ambrose, Courtney Walsh and Ian Bishop to form

the traditional quartet while Lewis handles the drinks.

On a Sabina Park pitch that has lost all of its old life, the bowlers are not likely to have any joy. More likely are big scores from the outstanding batsmen on show: Tendulkar, Mohammad Azharuddin, Brian Lara, Carl Hooper and Shivnarine Chanderpaul. It is a scenario India would favour as a draw to start with would suit their purposes.

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England wait on Grayson

Rugby Union

England could be looking for a new goal-kicker and stand-off for the Triple Crown match in Wales on Saturday week if Paul Grayson fails to recover in time from a hip-muscle injury he suffered playing for Northampton on Tuesday night.

Grayson, who has scored 135 points in just eight games for England, faces an anxious battle to be fit and Northampton's rugby director, Ian McGeechan, said: "The muscle has been torn and there is internal bleeding. But if it is just that he has got a fighting chance of being fit for Cardiff."

"He has already had two treatment sessions with my physio this morning and he and Paul need to get rid of the bleeding before they can properly assess his condition. Obviously he will not play for us this weekend."

Grayson said: "I felt some-

thing pop after my first goal-kick and within a few minutes had no option but to go off."

If he does not recover, Jack Rowell, the England coach, will be limited by the few first-choice English stand-offs being in the top flight. The obvious choice would be a return for Mike Catt, who has had two brief spells in the position before being dropped in favour of Grayson in both the last two seasons. The riskier option would be to give first caps to either of the England A stand-offs, Alex King or Mark Mapletoft.

But there was better news of another England player who limped off on Tuesday night after the Saracens flanker Richard Hill confirmed that he should have recovered from his ankle problem by the weekend.

Wales will definitely have to decide on a new outside-half for the England game as Arwel Thomas had to pull out yesterday because of a partially torn

ligament in his right knee. The Swansea No 10 conceded that his chances of forcing his way into the Lions squad for the tour to South Africa were now over.

Thomas's position looks like being filled by either Jonathan Davies or Neil Jenkins. Jenkins has played at full-back throughout the Championship, despite remaining at outside-half for Pontypridd, while Cardiff's Davies has extended his cap collection to 31 this season with appearances against Australia, the United States, Scotland and France.

BBC Television are breaking with tradition and showing both of the season's final Five Nations matches live. The BBC plan to show France's match against Scotland in Paris and Wales' game against England in Cardiff simultaneously. France will have the first half of their Grand Slam decider shown on BBC1, with the second half switching to BBC2.



One lap wonder
Mike Rowbottom meets the rapid
Jamie Baulch, page 24

sport

Pompey times
Ken Jones talks to Terry Fenwick
about management, page 24



No complaint by Reed over replacement

Football
ADAM SZRETER

Mike Reed, the Birmingham referee at the centre of the storm surrounding Chelsea's extra-time penalty winner against Leicester in their FA Cup fifth-round replay last week, has refused to be drawn on the decision by the Premier League to replace him for the Chelsea-Leicester match at Stamford Bridge next month.

Reed's decision incensed the Leicester fans and his car, which also contained members of his family, was attacked at traffic lights in London on the way home. On Monday police expressed reservations about the wisdom of Reed being allowed to referee the game on 19 April because of fears for his safety. It led to the Football Association saying it was "likely" that Reed would be replaced if a request was made by the police.

However, it was the Premier League which took the decision to axe Reed. A statement read: "The FA Premier League have decided to appoint a replacement for Mike Reed for the Chelsea-Leicester City game in April. The decision has been taken after careful consideration of the various factors involved and in consultation with the appropriate interested parties."

Reed said: "I have no comment to make. The statement from the Premier League says it all. That's enough as far as I am concerned." When asked if he was happy with the decision, he repeated his previous comments.

Leicester's manager Martin O'Neill branded the 117th-minute penalty decision, which led to Chelsea's defender Frank Leboeuf scoring the winner from the spot, as "disgraceful". But O'Neill and his Chelsea counterpart, Ruud Geulit, came out against the use

of technology to aid officials and the possibility of taking up that option was ruled out by Fifa at its weekend annual meeting. O'Neill also said at the weekend that he was happy for Reed to take charge of the next meeting of the two clubs.

Two FA charges against Bruce Grobbelaar will remain on the books while the goalkeeper and his fellow-accused await the outcome of any re-trial in the Winchester Crown Court match-fixing case.

Meanwhile, it looks certain that the FA will redraft its rules governing betting on games. "Everything is on hold until the full criminal proceedings have been completed," the FA spokesman Steve Double said. "We are constantly reviewing FA rules, including those relating to betting and that was made clear some time ago."

Roger Stanislaus yesterday scrapped plans to launch his return to football with the Second Division strugglers Notts County following his 12-month drugs ban. The 28-year-old former Brentford and Leyton Orient defender, who became the first English footballer to fail a drugs test in February last year, was lined up to play for County's reserves against Wolves last night. However Stanislaus, who was sacked by Orient after testing positive and has been training at Meadow Lane this week, decided to withdraw from the game.

Sam Allardyce, the County manager, had earlier indicated he would consider offering Stanislaus, who was banned for 12 months after testing positive for cocaine in December 1995, a contract if he had shaped up well in the game.

Nicolas Anelka, Arsenal's 17-year-old signing from Paris St-Germain, made his debut for the Gunners in yesterday's reserve-team game against Norwich City as a half-time substitute after his international clearance arrived during the first half of the match.

Ferguson refuses to release players

GUY HODGSON

The perennial club versus country dispute will be aired again this summer when Alex Ferguson refuses to release his Manchester United players for England duty.

England's coach, Glenn Hoddle, will need his powers of persuasion to prevent the international tournament in France descending into no more than a run out for his reserves. Fifa, the world governing body, confirmed yesterday that English club managers will be free to withdraw their players from the tournament, which begins on 3 June and is classified as a series of friendly matches. As such club managers have the right to refuse to release their

players. Ferguson has said he will exercise that right while Liverpool's manager Roy Evans has described the event as "crazy". England are due to meet Brazil, Italy and the host country over 10 days in June but Ferguson has already said his players will not be available.

Ferguson said: "This summer will be a rest for Manchester United players. Some of them will be playing in World Cup qualifiers on 8 June. We can't do anything about that but we can about the others."

"Over the last few years we've played an average of 50 games and this season will be no different. Then there are internationals and friendly internationals. It's such a strain and with young players it can't be done."



Greg Norman prepares to take on the world's best golfers today in the Doral-Ryder Open in Miami. Photograph: AP

Pressure for Ryder Cup change

Golf

Sentiment for change in qualifying rules for the European Ryder Cup appears to be growing as it becomes increasingly clear that several major European players will not qualify.

Seve Ballesteros, the European captain, complained last week that his players should be able to pick up Ryder Cup points in the more significant PGA Tour events, such as this week's Doral-Ryder Open, and wants to be allowed to make four choices this year and not two, as the case now is.

But while Colin Montgomerie supports the Spaniard's line, Sam Torrance, who plays in the Moroccan Open in Agadir this week in search of Ryder Cup points, thinks three picks plus nine selected automatically would be the ideal choice.

Montgomerie leads the Eu-

ropean Ryder cup points list, but Nick Faldo, Bernhard Langer and the Swede Jesper Parnevik are among the leading players who do not look likely to qualify. Faldo's victory on Sunday in Los Angeles earned no points since only the major championships played in the US count for European Ryder Cup points.

Parnevik has two seconds and a third on the PGA Tour this year but has received no Ryder Cup points for his efforts.

Another European likely not to make the Ryder Cup team is Jose Maria Olazabal, who returned very strongly at Dubai last week after missing 18 months of competition because of foot problems.

"I'm sure Seve would love Olazabal at 85 per cent," Montgomerie said. "He can handle the pressure and that's what it's all about."

Olazabal, who teamed with Ballesteros in several Ryder Cups to form a virtually un-

beatable duo, proved he can still play by shooting a 65 in the third round at Dubai.

"It's not too late to change," Langer, who is 13th on the European list, said about altering the selection process. "We've got seven months to go. I would strongly support any move to get more picks."

The European team can establish its own qualifying rules but officials have shown no inclination to modify the rules.

Torrance, hoping to play in his ninth successive Ryder Cup in Valderrama, Spain, in September, thinks that for the captain to have four picks is too many. "It is imperative to play our best team. But I would suggest three picks, not four," he said. "That's because I think you also need to give more opportunities to the players on the European Tour. Then there would be no controversy."

"We had only two picks last time, Ian Woosnam missed out

and only got into the team because Jose Maria Olazabal dropped out. You don't want to go into a Ryder Cup without someone like Woosie."

"With the way Jesper Parnevik is playing in the United States, he is looking like a certain pick and Nick Faldo will be in the team whether he qualifies or not. Then there is Olazabal coming back, and Woosie and Bernhard Langer to consider."

"They may all play more in America and what if only two of them qualify? Someone we need in the team will miss out."

Torrance is ninth on the Ryder Cup points table but he has made no headway since the beginning of the year. That is because he missed the half-way cut in the two Australian tournaments at the end of January and has had the last month off.

"It was sad to miss the two cuts in Australia, but now I've got to get in there and get in four good rounds this week," he said.

Hogan is driving force for Faldo

The Doral-Ryder Open in Florida brings the PGA Tour to the East Coast of the United States today - and with it most of the leading names beginning their run-up to the Masters.

Greg Norman, Ernie Els, Nick Price, Mark O'Meara, Colin Montgomerie, Phil Mickelton, Fred Couples, Vijay Singh and Jesper Parnevik are among those joining the Masters champion Nick Faldo, the US Open winner, Steve Jones, and the PGA champion, Mark Brooks.

The two biggest names missing will be the Open champion, Tom Lehman, and Tiger Woods. The young American took the week off to be with his father, who has just been discharged from hospital following heart bypass surgery.

Montgomerie, who has topped the European Tour money list for the last four years, will play seven consecutive weeks in the United States as he tries to break through and finally win a major championship.

The Doral will be Norman's first PGA Tour event since the Tour Championship last October in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Frank Nobilo of New Zealand, one of the leading lights of the European Tour, joined the PGA Tour this year, finishing 17th in his first event at the Nissan Open, eight strokes behind Faldo. Nobilo, who has had four top-10 finishes in major championships the last three years, will also be at Doral.

Faldo has entered a phase of his career where his main opponent is history - names like Jack Nicklaus, Bobby Jones, Walter Hagen, Ben Hogan and Gary Player. The flesh-and-blood opponents - Norman, Montgomerie and Els this week at Doral, for example - are mere incidentals who occasionally get in the way on Faldo's assault on posterity.

"When Faldo stands on the course with his arms folded his body language is saying that he's the only person on the course," Tom Lehman said about Faldo's intensity.

Faldo never hits a careless shot. Yet there are times - when he is not in his major championship mode, when he is out of contention - when it seems like he is trying to perfect something he can use on another, more important day.

"I think I'm a player who has to be inspired," Faldo said after winning at Riviera last weekend. "I think it's everything, the atmosphere, the golf course, everything."

The victory was Faldo's sixth on the PGA Tour - and three of those earned him the Masters Green Jacket. "I'm not one who can just roll up and play," Faldo said. "I need something to get me going. My inspiration at Riviera last weekend was one of the greats whose achievements he is attempting to emulate."

"This is not just another win," Faldo said. "Riviera has a great history and I know it was a favourite of Ben Hogan's. This is the kind of course where I was meant to win, and I played exactly how I wanted to."

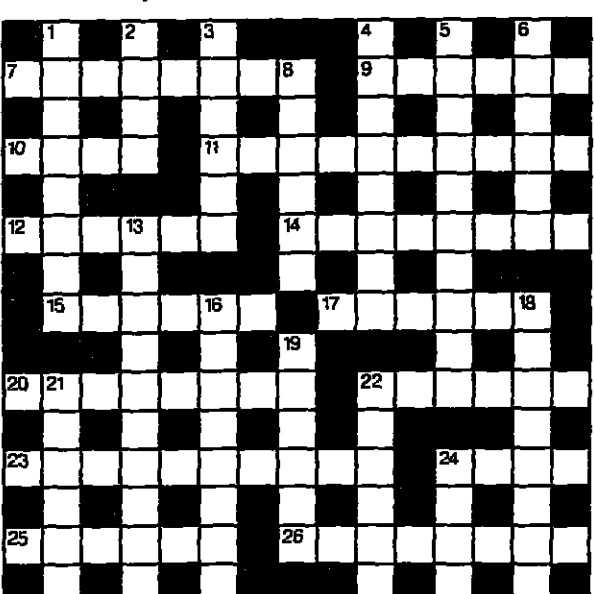
Hogan is one of only 10 players to have won more than the six majors Faldo has achieved - three Masters and three Open Championships.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3239, Thursday 6 March

By Mass

Wednesday's solution



- ACROSS**
- Deviated in contract, grabbing trick back (8)
 - Waterproof without question? How can one tell? (6)
 - One in group making a pile (4)
 - Garbage is thinning out with skip (10)
 - Lady's without silver for the bill (6)
 - Two Rads contrived to keep unionist away from centre (8)
 - Sets about punctures (6)
 - Slow movement gets a soldier in trouble (6)
 - Is caught in port, see (8)
 - Unwell consuming phosphorus precipitate (6)
 - Gushed about male, the European producing flush (4-6)
 - Beef's tender round North (4)
 - Direction includes strait - not much of a sound (6)
 - Edifying short address Ray composed (8)

- DOWN**
- Bishop always has time for a drink (8)
 - Vehicle, bit of a trailer? (4)
 - Strong affiliation (6)
 - One with bouquet voice
 - Queen has a drop (including dash of rum) in court (10)
 - Got through? Letter turned up in flat (6)
 - Model needs work: is this helping (6)
 - Coherent - certainly not unhinged! (10)
 - Commented about rival getting married (8)
 - Not distinguished enough for the bar (8)
 - Fishes run in rings (6)
 - I run on rough fuel that's fuming (6)
 - Create confusion after Sunday joint... (6)
 - ... joint with lots of wine (4)

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Wigan exiled by £12m Central Park sale

Rugby League
DAVE HADFIELD

Wigan will leave both Central Park and the town within two years following the club's sale of its ground for more than £12m to Tesco. The game's most successful club will move in with Bolton Wanderers at their new ground in Horwich, until they can build a new stadium in Wigan itself.

"It has always been our desire to play in a modern, state-of-the-art stadium in Wigan and this deal is buying us time," the club's chairman, Jack Robinson, said.

The deal was immediately attacked by the chairman of Wigan Athletic, whose plan to buy Central Park and redevelop it for joint use had been approved by a meeting of the rugby club's shareholders in January.

"This is a disastrously sad day for Wigan," said Dave Whelan, who added that Robinson and his fellow-director, Tom Rathbone, had "completely and utterly disregarded the views of the shareholders".

Whelan, the former Blackburn Rovers full-back and multi-millionaire who has long sought an involvement with the rugby club, is also exploring whether he could challenge the

directors' legal right to enter into the contract with Tesco.

Robinson, on the other hand, regards the board as having no choice but to accept the improved Tesco bid, which was three times Whelan's offer. He has also described the terms of the lease under which Wigan would have rented Central Park - their home since 1902 - from Whelan as "a financial straitjacket".

As for riding roughshod over the shareholders, Robinson argues that circumstances have changed radically, with the improved offer from Tesco and the revelation of the Whelan lease. "We have a duty to get the

best deal possible - and this is it," Robinson said.

The availability of the new ground in Horwich gives Wigan breathing space, although the idea of moving out of the borough is not popular with the club's spectators.

"As a short-term, stop-gap arrangement they may feel very differently about it," Robinson said.

How short-term it will be, however, depends on Wigan successfully finding and developing a new site in the town, something they can only do in co-operation with the local council. However, relations with the borough have often been

less than harmonious in the past.

Robinson admitted that the availability of an alternative ground nearby might improve the club's bargaining position with the council. But, as Richard Gee, the club's development advisor, put it: "Our primary intention is to build a new ground within the Wigan boundary, but we can't say categorically that we are going to be able to do it. We've got the will and the desire to do it, but we need the same willingness from the council."

Failing that, the exile of rugby league's most famous name could be a long one.

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